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## THESIS

**ANTI-AMERICANISM: A PERFECT ADDITION TO A  
RUSSIAN AUTHORITARIAN'S POLITICAL TOOLBOX**

by

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December 2013

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AUTHORITARIAN'S POLITICAL TOOLBOX**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis analyzes anti-Americanism in Russia during the era of Vladimir Putin. The objective is to evaluate Vladimir Putin's anti-Americanism and the political implications of Putinist anti-Americanism within Russia.

The central questions that this thesis strives to answer are: (1) What are the roots of Vladimir Putin's anti-Americanism and the anti-American tendencies of segments of the Russian populace from the 1990s to the present day; (2) What is the relationship between the progression of Putin's anti-Americanism and the anti-American sympathies of the Russian public; and (3) What are the potential domestic political benefits garnered by Putin's hybrid authoritarian regime as a result of his anti-American rhetoric and policy positions? This thesis concludes that Vladimir Putin is inherently anti-American and the Russian populace's anti-American mood is directly manipulated by Putin. Putin employs the mechanics of his state to propagate anti-Americanism within Russia for domestic political reasons.

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# **I. PUTINIST AUTHORITARIANISM AND ANTI-AMERICANISM: AN INTRODUCTION**

## **A. PURPOSE**

Is Vladimir Putin nuts? Has he drunk too much Russian vodka? Does he truly hate America? Do the people he presides over truly hate America? This thesis analyzes modern anti-Americanism in Russia during the era of Vladimir Putin. The objective is to evaluate Vladimir Putin's anti-Americanism and the domestic political implications of Putinist anti-Americanism within Russia.

The central questions that this thesis strives to answer are: (1) What are the roots of Vladimir Putin's anti-Americanism as well as the anti-American tendencies of segments of the Russian populace from the 1990s to present day? (2) What is the relationship between the progression of Putin's anti-Americanism and the anti-American sympathies of the Russian public? and, (3) What are the potential domestic political benefits garnered by Putin's hybrid authoritarian regime as a result of his anti-American rhetoric and policy positions?

This thesis will show that Vladimir Putin has maintained an anti-American attitude rooted in his youth and early adulthood in the Soviet Union. Vladimir Putin developed an anti-American cognitive pre-disposition. As president, Putin's anti-American outward volume fluctuated, but his intrinsic anti-American attitude remained. Vladimir Putin has been, is, and will be inherently anti-American. The hybrid democratic-authoritarian nature of Putin's state necessitates his usage of authoritarian mechanisms to manipulate democratic practices. A unified opposition movement of the public and disaffected elites could pose a serious challenge to regime. This thesis will also show that Anti-Americanism is employed by Putin to inhibit such a union, keeping one or both segments loyal, or at least ambivalent. Anti-Americanism allows Putin to demonstrate democratic political conformity while simultaneously providing authoritarian political distraction. He represents the sentiments of the people who "elected" him by enunciating their beliefs, like anti-Americanism, even though that

sentiment has been manipulated by him. Anti-Americanism also distracts the two pillar segments of society from forming common by helping to hide the underlying problems associated with Putin's regime.

This thesis shall also demonstrate that the level of the Russian public's hostility toward America tends to increase or decrease in conjunction with an increasing or decreasing level of anti-American vehemence displayed by Putin's Kremlin. Putin can sway his nation's moods as he deems prudent. A perpetual relationship developed between Vladimir Putin's anti-Americanism and the Russian populace's anti-Americanism, to include the public and elite sectors. Putin's anti-Americanism, by means of his authoritarian mechanisms, sufficiently arouses the public's anti-Americanism, thereby allowing Putin and the political elites to feed off of that public temperament. A positive feedback relationship between Putin and his polity has developed, and the state machine powers that loop, all for the political benefit of Putin.

## **B. IMPORTANCE**

A roller-coaster metaphor could easily be used to describe ongoing Russian-American relations on the global scene. Since the disintegration of the Soviet Union, relations between the surviving superpower, the United States, and the dominant Soviet successor state, the Russian Federation, have fluctuated wildly between open friendship, cold-war like intransigence, and anything in between. Anti-American rhetoric and policy actions have emanated from the Kremlin for decades, but hostile words and quarrelsome policies cannot force the United States into a standoffish position toward Russia. Under the leadership of Vladimir Putin, Russia's continued vital importance on the geostrategic scene need only be demonstrated by its actions. Such actions include Putin's baptism of fire in the Chechen Caucasus crisis upon ascending to the presidency in 1999, a revitalized Russian economic might hinged on mineral resources, an invasion of Georgia in 2008, their bilateral relations with several of the most potentially de-stabilizing regimes like those in Syria and Iran, and their permanent leverage within the United Nations Security Council. America must interact with Russia one way or another in this

ever-shrinking world. Understanding the nature and impetuses of Russian/Putinist anti-Americanism could go a long way in aiding American policy-makers' perception of just why Putin and Russia do what they do.

As the USSR dissolved, Boris Yeltsin took the reins of the Russian Federation, the largest country on the globe, and the most powerful of the post-Soviet successor states. Many in the West harbored dreams that Russia would transform into a democracy on the Western model and adopt foreign policies compatible with the current Western democratic states. When Putin came to the forefront in 1999, many hoped he, too, would continue down a path toward liberalization; it was not to be. Putin has steered the Russian political system's development closer toward an authoritarian model, but not a total one; Russia has become what many in the broader literature refer to as a "hybrid," or "electoral authoritarian," or "competitive authoritarian" regime.<sup>1</sup> Since the spread of Western democracy stagnated beyond former Soviet Eastern Europe in the 1990s, hybrid regimes that combine aspects of authoritarianism and institutional democracy have become ever-more commonplace as a result of what some call a "democratic rollback."<sup>2</sup>

Putin must operate in a hybrid authoritarian political system in which actors within the state maintain degrees of political leverage over their government and leader. An understanding of such a system, therefore, shall be necessary to gauge any domestic political implications and potential benefits of Putin's anti-Americanism. By better understanding Putin's political situation within his state and the potential political benefits accrued by Putin for anti-American rhetoric and policy, Western entities might be better able to interact with Putin rather than discounting his actions as only the whims of a Russian strong-man.

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<sup>1</sup> Nikolai Petrov, Masha Lipman, and Henry Hale, "Overmanaged Democracy in Russia: Governance Implications of Hybrid Regimes," *Carnegie Papers*, no 106 (February 2010): 1; Grigorii Golosov, "The Regional Roots of Electoral Authoritarianism in Russia," *Europe-Asia Studies* 63, no. 4 (June 2011): 623; Timothy Colton and Henry Hale, "The Putin Vote: Presidential Electorates in a Hybrid Regime," *Slavic Review* 68, no. 3 (Fall 2009): 503.

<sup>2</sup> Larry Diamond, "The Democratic Rollback: The Resurgence of the Predatory State," in *Essential Readings in Comparative Politics*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., eds Patrick O'Neil and Ronald Rogowski (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2010), 235.

### C. HYPOTHESIS AND THEORY

One major issue investigated in this thesis is the connection between Vladimir Putin's anti-Americanism and the anti-Americanism of the Russian population. That population includes the general public and Putinist elites. The thesis shall also attempt to gauge the domestic political benefits garnered by Putin's anti-Americanism within the authoritarian system that he has created.

Peter Katzenstein and Robert Keohane define anti-Americanism as a "psychological tendency to hold negative views of the United States and of American society in general...an attitude."<sup>3</sup> Ivan Krastev comes to a similar definition: "anti-Americanism is a systemic opposition to America as a whole. It is a critique of the United States that transcends mere disagreement over specific policy questions or government decisions."<sup>4</sup> Anti-Americanism, therefore, cannot be reduced to an isolated incident of criticism or opposition to a single U.S. policy or action. An extended pattern of animosity in rhetoric and actions must be observable.

Regarding Vladimir Putin, it is hypothesized that the roots of his anti-Americanism long pre-date his rise to power. His anti-Americanism fits the Katzenstein/Keohane narrative of a psychological animosity toward America independent of reactions to the circumstances of any one instance in time. Putin did not suddenly become anti-American due to the Iraq War, a falling-out with George W. Bush, or long-term trends in American foreign policy deemed antagonistic to Russia; he has always been anti-American at heart, and the aforementioned issues simply exacerbated a cognitive condition that already existed. He possesses a "cognitive predisposition," as Robert Jervis would say. Putin's negative perceptions of America became engrained in his psyche during the Cold War, only to remain long past the collapse of the Soviet state.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Peter Katzenstein and Robert Keohane, *Anti-Americanism in World Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007), 12.

<sup>4</sup> Ivan Krastev, "The Anti-American Century," *Journal of Democracy* 15, no 2 (April 2004): 7.

<sup>5</sup> Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 239.

A second hypothesis is that Vladimir Putin, though not responsible for seeding an anti-American psyche within his populace, has utilized the means inherently available within his authoritarian system to effectively fan the flames. Such means include media manipulation, exploitation of public fears of instability, and overtly discrediting anything American/Western. Many people in Russia are or have been inherently hostile toward the United States for decades. It is further hypothesized, nevertheless, that any widespread anti-Americanism within the Russian populace, as portrayed in decades of polling data, is directly related to increases in the Putinist regime's anti-American vehemence. Putinist anti-Americanism when projected from the hierarchy of authoritarian power, therefore, positively influences public anti-Americanism. In light of the aforementioned definitions of anti-Americanism, gauging the level of Putin/Kremlin anti-Americanism over time will not be based on any one single-incident example of anti-Americanism, but rather longer-term trends in regime rhetoric and policy actions. A series of anti-American speeches or confrontational policy actions turns what appeared at the time to be an isolated example of anti-Americanism into a noticeable trend.

It is further hypothesized that Putin's and his nation's anti-Americanism has become self-perpetuating. Putin's anti-Americanism can be seen as in-line with the anti-American popular consensus which his machine has manipulated. This thereby garners significant domestic political benefit for Putin within his hybrid-authoritarian system. Putin's anti-Americanism drives public anti-Americanism which further feeds Putin's anti-Americanism; a feedback loop has developed. The thesis, thereby, also hypothesizes that though easy to discount as the whims of a paranoid man, Vladimir Putin's rhetoric and policy stances toward the United States remains pragmatic in light of the domestic political situation that he created for himself. Regardless of the number of "resets" in Russian-American relations, Putinist Russia will continue to breathe a degree of surliness toward the United States and West.

#### **D. BACKGROUND**

Anti-Americanism in Russia, whether emanating from the Kremlin or other segments of the populace, has influenced Russian-American relations during the ongoing

era of Vladimir Putin. Anti-Americanism, however, was not new to Russia with Putin's ascension to power on December 31, 1999. It has existed around the globe and among the world populace as well as within Russian politicians, elites, and the public for some time. Global anti-Americanism in the 1990s, according to Fouad Ajami, was much more rampant than many casually observed, and that post 9/11 sympathies for the United States were barely skin-deep and completely temporary. Historical hatred of America, thereby, cannot be supplanted but only temporarily hidden.<sup>6</sup> A lingering product of Soviet times, Russian anti-Americanism in the 1990s under then President Yeltsin, therefore, simply laid dormant, waiting to resurface, which it did during the Balkan crises of the later 1990s, followed by resurgent global anti-Americanism after the 2003 Iraq invasion.<sup>7</sup>

Much of the recent global anti-Americanism has been attributed to recent U.S. actions and policy, like those within the Global War on Terror, Iraq, and economic globalization. Russian anti-Americanism can also be attributed to the Soviet past and the history of the anti-Imperialist/Western class struggle. Such an "old" form of anti-Americanism still underlies the "new" form anchored in hatred of current U.S. policies, global influence, and lifestyle.<sup>8</sup>

According to the Levada Center, one of the pre-eminent organizations that has been gauging Russian public opinion since the late 1980s, vast majorities of people polled from 2003 through 2011 consider the United States to be an aggressor state seeking influence or outright control of other countries. During that same timeframe, large pluralities or even small majorities consistently rate relations between the United States and Russia positively with less than a majority, and often as low as 25%, believing the United States is inherently unfriendly or hostile toward the Russian Federation.<sup>9</sup> Within such polling data, however, when observed over the course of several years,

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<sup>6</sup> Fouad Ajami, "The Falseness of Anti-Americanism," *Foreign Policy*, no. 138 (September–October 2003): 58, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3183656>.

<sup>7</sup> Ole R. Holsti, *To See Ourselves as Others See Us: How Publics Abroad View the United States after 9/11* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 46.

<sup>8</sup> Eric Shiraev and Vladislav Zubok, *Anti-Americanism in Russia from Stalin to Putin* (New York: Palgrave, 2000), 2.

<sup>9</sup> "Russian Public Opinion 2010–2011" (Moscow: Levada Analytical Center, 2012), 276, 292, 293.

marked fluctuations underlying the overall summarizing numbers can be seen. Russian public opinion toward the United States, therefore, often oscillates as much as relations between the two states varies from “allies” to “friends” to “partners” to “colleagues” to “enemies” and back again.

### **1. Putin’s Evolving Anti-Americanism**

Vladimir Putin himself has been the subject of much scholarly interpretation. Examples of Putin-era anti-Americanism are abounding, as are analyses about the underlying facets thereof. The roots of Putin’s personal antipathy toward the United States, according to some in the literature, merely represents a present day continuation of hostilities from the Cold War. Anti-Americanism was drilled into him as a former Soviet KGB agent, and such an underlying mentality did not change with the USSR’s collapse. Sarah Mendelson and Theodore Gerber attribute much of Putin’s positions and paranoia to Soviet-era thinking about Russia, the United States, and government.<sup>10</sup> Others assign equal importance to current events in tracing modern Putinist anti-Americanism. Fyodor Lukyanov believes that Putin retains a grudge toward the United States for President George W. Bush’s alleged slighting of the Russian President during their first terms on issues from Iraq to NATO enlargement to unsuccessful repeal of the Jackson-Vanik trade restrictions. This pattern of slighting, therefore, is equally important to explaining the ongoing animosity.<sup>11</sup>

Perhaps “it’s the foreign policy, stupid!” Anti-Americanism around the world is as much fueled by U.S. foreign policy actions as by any intrinsic or psychological cause, according to some scholars, eloquently summarized by Juan Cole.<sup>12</sup> Putin’s anti-Americanism, therefore, could represent a common product of modern relations between

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<sup>10</sup> Sarah Mendelson and Theodore Gerber, “Us and Them: Anti-American Views of the Putin Generation,” *The Washington Quarterly* 31, no. 2 (2008), 132.

<sup>11</sup> Fyodor Lukyanov, “Why is Russia anti-American?” *RT*, February 24, 2012, <http://lolo.rt.com/politics/columns/unpredictable-world-foreign-lukyanov/russia-usa-america-putin/>.

<sup>12</sup> Juan Cole, “Anti-Americanism: It’s the Policies,” *The American Historical Review* 111, no. 4 (October 2006), 1089, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/ahr.111.4.1120>.

two unequally powerful nations operating within the confines of the contemporary global environment.

## **2. Putin's Hybrid-Authoritarian Machine**

There remains a general consensus that Putinist Russia, while not a full-fledged authoritarian state, certainly is not a liberal democracy either. Russia operates as an authoritarian-democratic system, whether referred to as a “hybrid regime,” “electoral authoritarianism,” “competitive authoritarianism,” or even “overmanaged democracy.” Marie Mendras effectively sums up many writers’ interpretations in referencing “2-sided behavior” based on authoritarian political methods while claiming to be a democracy. Dmitri Trenin similarly calls Russia an authoritarian state with democratic institutions.<sup>13</sup> Stephen Kotkin provides a great summation to this consensus about the general nature of Russian government and politics: “a ramshackle authoritarian system with some democratic trappings.”<sup>14</sup>

Some attribute Putin’s power-base and hold on power with the elites in Russia, exemplified by the works of Karen Dawisha and Charles Clover. Dawisha asserts that the Putin inner circle of oligarchs and businessmen within the government have supplanted state interests with their own personal interests; Clover claims that the corrupted elites’ sway over Putin is based on their non-interference in politics in return for bi-lateral favors.<sup>15</sup> Others consider the Russian public at large a significant power-base for Putin. Timothy Colton and Henry Hale argue that Putin does maintain a broad public appeal with the electorate, given that his election victories have not been based solely on fraud.<sup>16</sup> Public polling for the duration of Putin’s time in power have borne witness to consistent

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<sup>13</sup> Dmitri Trenin, *Post-Imperium: A Eurasian Story* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2011), 72.

<sup>14</sup> Stephen Kotkin, “Russia under Putin: Toward Democracy or Dictatorship?,” Foreign Policy Research Institute, March 2007, <http://www.fpri.org/enotes/200703.kotkin.russiademocracydictatorship.html>.

<sup>15</sup> Karen Dawisha, “Is Russia’s Foreign Policy that of a Corporatist-Kleptocratic Regime?,” *Post-Soviet Affairs* 27, no. 4 (2011), 332; Charles Clover, “Who Runs Russia?,” *Financial Times*, December 16, 2011, <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/2/b4b5a2aa-26cb-11e1-9ed3-00144feabdc0.html>.

<sup>16</sup> Timothy Colton and Henry E. Hale, “The Putin Vote: Presidential Electorates in a Hybrid Regime,” *Slavic Review* 68, no. 3 (Fall 2009): 502, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25621652>.



majorities, often as high as 70% favorability ratings for the strong-man.<sup>17</sup> Whether beholden to the societal elites, the public, or both, Putin's grip on power does remain partially contingent on the acquiescence of these segments of society. A politician that must still appeal to his populace needs to demonstrate some level of commonality with that populace: shared goals, values, beliefs, etc. Anti-Americanism represents an easy way to show commonality with an electorate at risk of becoming disenchanted with Putin's authoritarian revival. Putin can thereby garner the domestic political benefit of their support.

Whatever Putin's government and political system is called and regardless of how secure his position is deemed to be, the system he runs depends on him. Regardless of the metaphor employed, Putin is the key, the lynchpin, the apex (etc.) of the current Russian political organism. Because the structure relies on his "manual control," there is a consensus that his absence or departure would make the system's survival tenuous.<sup>18</sup>

### **3. Implications of Russians' Anti-Americanism**

As alluded to in polling data, the intensity of the Russian populace's anti-Americanism may appear consistent, but is really anything but. Its roots "do not go very deep" according to Vladimir Shlapentokh, who claims that the Putinist state and its media control are to blame for any rampant anti-Americanism in Russia. Changes in regime and media tone would likely lessen widespread anti-Americanism in the countryside. By controlling the media, the Soviets, like Putin, could control the level of anti-American news or propaganda that reached the isolated Soviet population and thereby directly control their level of anti-Americanism. Prior to 1947 that anti-Americanism was tepid at worst. Soviet leaders intensified or curtailed the anti-American propaganda in their media throughout the Cold War. Under Stalin it was rampant; under Brezhnev it was restricted while pursuing a mutual *détente*; by the time of Gorbachev's *Perestroika*, it was

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<sup>17</sup> "Russian Public Opinion 2010–2011" (Moscow: Levada Analytical Center, 2012), 11.

<sup>18</sup> Nikolai Petrov, Masha Lipman, and Henry Hale, "Overmanaged Democracy in Russia: Governance Implications of Hybrid Regimes," *Carnegie Papers*, no. 106 (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, February 2010), 26.

practically non-existent. So the current Russian public's anti-Americanism may be widespread, but may also remain only skin deep.<sup>19</sup>

Or are the elements of Russian society beyond the Kremlin inner-circle legitimately receptive to anti-Americanism? Mendelson and Gerber hold that the "Putin Generation" of young Russian adults is extremely receptive to the regime's anti-Americanism and most youths hold similarly deep anti-American convictions.<sup>20</sup> Even if so, such a group only represents a fraction of the populace as a whole. The Putinist regime's survival depends on a much wider base of support. A combination of die-hard anti-Americans and Shlapentokh's shallow-rooted and passive anti-Americans, created by the Putinist mechanisms, result in an amalgamation of the entire population that allows the Putinist regime to claim itself as reflective of the consensus of its governed. Russian society is anti-American and, therefore, so too is the Putinist government.

## **E. METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES**

The historical and analytical methods will be employed in this thesis covering an extended case study of anti-Americanism in Russia during the years under Vladimir Putin's leadership from 1999 until present day 2013. The analysis will focus on anti-Americanism as a domestic political tool within an authoritarian state rather than focusing on its use as a geostrategic mechanism within international relations. Specific foreign policy actions and postures taken by Putin and Russia as well as words from his and his surrogates' own mouths from the historical record will be referenced for contextual analysis with the goal of discerning patterns of anti-Americanism on both the world stage and the Russian stage during the prescribed timeline.

The most important sources for this thesis will be transcripts of statements by Russian officials, including Vladimir Putin, as well as contemporary scholarly analyses of Russian politics and foreign policy. Of the sources surveyed, many are primary

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<sup>19</sup> Vladimir Shlapentokh, "The Puzzle of Russian Anti-Americanism: From 'Below' or From 'Above,'" *Europe-Asia Studies* 63, no. 5 (2011), 875–876.

<sup>20</sup> Sarah Mendelson and Theodore Gerber, "Us and Them: Anti-American Views of the Putin Generation," *The Washington Quarterly* 31, no. 2 (2008), 137.

sources, to include Putin's autobiographical interview book *First Person*. Primary source transcripts from the Russian government's public online archives will be equally valuable, to include Federal Assembly addresses and Putin's yearly multi-hour long news conferences and public-oriented discussions known as *Direct Line* in which public and press posit questions on a plethora of topics including foreign affairs and politics. These primary sources, along with the a wide array of all-encompassing academic and scholarly analytical resources available on the subject areas pursuant to this thesis will provide a solid foundation from which to delve into the necessary aspects of anti-Americanism.

As noted already, Russian public polling data spanning the entire era of Putin's leadership is widely available from different organizations, including the independent Levada Center, as well as the state controlled Russian Public Opinion Research Center. Data from such organizations will facilitate a general analysis of the levels of anti-Americanism beyond the Kremlin walls and Russian government officials' mouths.

In addition, historical and contemporary works about authoritarian governments and the structures and functionality of such systems will provide valuable insight into the near-authoritarian/hybrid system now entrenched in Putin's Russia so that an evaluation may be made about the utility of anti-Americanism to domestic politics.

## **F. ROADMAP**

Chapter II will outline the recent historical examples of anti-Americanism in Putin's Russia to include an analysis of Putin's evolving anti-Americanism over time from a historical context during the Soviet era as well as post-Soviet Russia. Significant discussion will be offered about the role the 1990s Yeltsin years may have played in the exacerbation of Putin's hostility toward America. Starting with his sudden appearance at the power-table in 1999 through present day 2013, the Putin years shall be analyzed for consistencies or fluctuations in Putinist anti-Americanism. The chapter will conclude with an interpretation of the many different forms that Putin's anti-Americanism has taken.

The thesis will then turn toward the nature of domestic Russian politics in Chapter III, namely an overview of Putin's hybrid authoritarian regime and what makes his

Russia something less than an outright authoritarian state. An analysis of the role of the public and the elites within the Russian political sphere will also be offered. A base of understanding of the democratic-authoritarian nature of Russia is required. By showing how Putin's hold on power still remains in the hands of his constituents, the subsequent interpretation of the necessity of Putin's anti-Americanism in his domestic sphere will be more plausible. This chapter will also include discussion of the authoritarian mechanisms available to Putin and detail the means by which Putin and his government are able to influence public sentiment and opinion toward the United States.

Chapter IV will then combine the nature of Russian anti-Americanism with the domestic circumstances of Russian politics to detail the potential domestic political implications of Putin's anti-Americanism. Analysis will be offered regarding the benefits intrinsic to Putin's exploitative use of anti-Americanism.

Chapter V will conclude the thesis with a summary of the findings and interpretations. Recommendations for further research shall also be presented. Additionally, insight will be offered regarding the most recent developments in Russian-American relations and how these instances could be interpreted based on the Putinist proclivity for domestically employed anti-Americanism.

## **II. VLADIMIR PUTIN'S ANTI-AMERICANISM: OUTWARDLY FLUCTUATING BUT INTERNALLY CONSISTENT?**

Chapter II will offer a thorough examination of the central character in this thesis: Vladimir Putin. An analysis shall be made regarding Putin's personal history from a modest childhood upbringing to eventual twenty-first century global strongman. Special focus shall be offered regarding his adulthood experience within the Soviet Union and his tenure within the anti-Western paranoia-generating machine, namely the Committee for State Security, or KGB. The investigations shall then turn toward Putin's post-Soviet-era experiences during the Yeltsin years culminating in Putin's own ascendancy to the pinnacle of power within the Russian Federation.

This chapter will provide evidence that Vladimir Putin's anti-Americanism over his lifetime has been a consistent personal attribute, even if temporarily behind-the-scenes given fluctuations in official Russian government attitude toward the United States. According to Peter Katzenstein, Robert Keohane, and Ivan Krastev, anti-Americanism represents a wide mental propensity to negatively view all aspects of America and American society.<sup>21</sup> This study of Putinist anti-Americanism, therefore, will not be reduced to any single isolated incident of criticism or opposition to a particular U.S. policy or action. Rather, an extended pattern of animosity in rhetoric and actions will be observable. Putin has always been innately anti-American based on his earlier history. The vehemence of his anti-Americanism, as measured by the frequency of anti-American rhetoric and policy actions, seems to fluctuate over the course of his tenure on the global scene. The roots of his anti-Americanism, nevertheless, run too deep, formed in his early adulthood, ossified before his rise to power, and *eventually* displayed in earnest while in power.

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<sup>21</sup> Peter Katzenstein and Robert Keohane, *Anti-Americanism in World Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007), 12; Ivan Krastev, "The Anti-American Century," *Journal of Democracy* 15, no 2 (April 2004): 7.

## **A. PUTIN'S EARLY HISTORY**

Vladimir Putin's rise to the top of Russian political society is quite remarkable given his upbringing in a poverty-stricken Soviet family. He lived generally distant from the levers of power until he was suddenly holding those very levers. Little in his early life could be seen as a signal of his future. But it remains those early years and especially into adulthood that provided the seed of Putin's perpetually negative outlook toward the West and the United States. Putin's anti-Americanism, therefore, stems from his early life, failing to dramatically alter or dissipate with the evolving geopolitical situation.

### **1. Early Life and College**

Born into a poor family after the Great Patriotic War, Vladimir Putin's childhood was marked by standard Soviet deprivation: cramped and paltry living conditions, food rationing, and isolation from the outside world. A self-described childhood "hooligan," Putin was at best an average student and preferred to remain in the background and refrained from any leadership over his classmates. His teachers, nevertheless, recognized his intelligence, even if his grades never seemed to coincide. His childhood instructors also note his generally unforgiving nature toward anyone that Putin believes betrayed him, regardless of the severity of the issue in question.<sup>22</sup> He took a particular liking to martial arts, specifically Judo because of the necessity of hard work, physical fitness, and blood compared to the "ballet" nature of karate. Putin's love of Judo would continue into present day, where he still routinely practices. Putin's admiration of those who are willing to toil in the extreme and his general loathing of any disloyalty cast some light on Putin's more recent behavior has a head of state, especially regarding alleged slights by the United States and international community.

By the time Putin attended college at Leningrad State University (LGU), most LGU faculty were ardent communist supporters, so Putin became exposed to the most ardent anti-American and anti-Western Soviet propaganda while in college, under the

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<sup>22</sup> Nataliya Gevorkyan, Natalya Timakova, and Andrei Kolesnikov, *First Person*, trans. Catherine Fitzpatrick (New York: Perseus Books Group, 2000), 13, 16.

guise of receiving a higher education and studying law.<sup>23</sup> Putin's exposure to Sovietized anti-Americanism would only increase exponentially as he now fancied a career as an officer in the KGB to do his part to protect the Soviet Union. His childhood ambitions of becoming a pilot or sailor had dissipated with age. Popular movies had portrayed a glamorized version of service within the state security apparatus, to which Putin had succumb before entering college.<sup>24</sup> His romanticized vision of spies and KGB service continued after his initial recruitment into the security services from the University, but eventually the truly mundane nature of the service hit him like so many whose pop-culture vision of reality is quashed by true reality.

## **2. Into the Shadows: Putin in the KGB and the Case for a Long Term Cognitive Predisposition**

The KGB recruited Vladimir Putin upon his graduating from Leningrad State University in 1975 with a law degree. Putin was stationed briefly in Leningrad observing foreigners in the city before being selected to undergo training in foreign intelligence, which he completed in 1983. He then transferred to Dresden, East Germany where his primary tasks involved monitoring politicians and communist party officials of the German Democratic Republic (GDR).<sup>25</sup> Far from the idealized notion of espionage he had longed for, Putin described himself as merely an adept bureaucrat and information gatherer.<sup>26</sup> His assignments within the KGB never lived up to his lofty expectations. The indoctrination process of becoming a KGB officer, however, could only exacerbate what anti-American sentiment he had developed in childhood under the Soviet propaganda system and in college during a Communist education.

Once a member of the KGB, always a member of the KGB. Vladimir Putin's time in the Soviet-era secret police could be analogous to someone who is initiated in the Society of Freemasons: not an official cult, but nevertheless possessing a definitive cult-

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<sup>23</sup> Eric Shiraev and Vladislav Zubock, *Anti-Americanism in Russia from Stalin to Putin* (New York: Palgrave, 2000), 140.

<sup>24</sup> Gevorkyan, *First Person*, 17.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

like culture. As a KGB officer, even if assigned to relatively non-critical posts with seemingly menial duties, Vladimir Putin was effectively indoctrinated to mistrust the United States and the West. Their anti-Americanism was involuntarily forced into them. Putin had been trained to rely on a certain thought process, a KGB mentality in which official manufacturing of enemies within and outside the nation is commonplace.<sup>27</sup> Those enemies or manipulators often take the alleged form of a Western entity, be they real or fictitious. Putin, like many of his Soviet-era predecessors, was trained to fabricate the illusion of an enemy and brought up to discount almost anything emanating from the official (or even unofficial) correspondence of the Cold War-era United States and Western civilization as a whole. Publically available statements, documents, or transcripts are assumed to contain nothing but misleading information; “therefore, the harder the Americans try to convince the Russians that they mean no harm, the more the Kremlin becomes suspicious of U.S. intentions.”<sup>28</sup>

The prominent academic Robert Jervis would presume that Vladimir Putin suffers from a severe case of cognitive predisposition. Jervis holds that a person’s past experiences and observance of events will dramatically affect how they interpret information in the future.<sup>29</sup> Jervis further expounds on four variables that determine how much an event might affect an individual’s perceptual predisposition; the more variables that are applicable, the more likely the event dramatically affects said person’s predispositions. America’s and the Soviet Union’s global chess game that has come to be called the Cold War represents the event under study in this. Specifically important is Putin’s involvement in it. The first variable asks if the person experienced the event first hand. As a citizen of the Soviet Union and KGB officer stationed in divided Europe, this variable obviously applies to Putin.

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<sup>27</sup> Sarah Mendleson and Theodore Gerber, “Us and Them: Anti-American Views of the Putin Generation,” *The Washington Quarterly* 31, no. 2 (2008): 131.

<sup>28</sup> Mikhail Tsypkin, “Russian Politics, Policy-making and American Missile Defense,” *International Affairs* 85, no. 4 (2009): 782.

<sup>29</sup> Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1976), 217.



Second, did the event occur in the person's early adult life? Putin joined the KGB right after college and matured during the height of the Cold War, so yes. Third, did the event result in big consequences for the person's nation or the person himself? Another obvious yes. Fourth, was the person familiar enough with the international environment that alternative explanations or perceptions regarding the event in question were possible? Putin, in the KGB and stationed in a foreign state, was much more informed of the international situation than the average Soviet citizen. He, therefore, was exposed to alternate analyses of the international situation than what a Soviet commoner heard exclusively from state-run propaganda.<sup>30</sup> All four of Jervis's variables are applicable to Putin's experience in the Cold War and KGB. This implies that those events, and in the case of this thesis the anti-Americanism intrinsic in those events, dramatically affected Putin's perceptions. Those perceptions became engrained in the cognitive psyche of Putin during the Cold War, only to remain long past the end of the Cold War and persist to the modern day.

A person's beliefs are formed from cognitive predispositions toward information that is consistent with their pre-held views. Information that subsequently conforms to those pre-held views resonates even more. It is a psychological-unmotivated bias that reinforces and strengthens the original belief, which can make it extremely difficult for leaders of states to receive and interpret signals properly, potentially conflating their threat perceptions. "The decision maker who thinks that the other side is probably hostile will see ambiguous information as confirming this image, whereas the same information about a country thought to be friendly would be taken more benignly."<sup>31</sup> Putin matured in the Soviet and KGB establishment to consider the United States hostile, so anti-Americanism was warranted, and his perception of information about the United States, therefore, will only further endorse such a pre-ordained hostile character, making ongoing anti-Americanism equally warranted.

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 239.

<sup>31</sup> Robert Jervis, "Perceiving and Coping with Threat," in *Perspectives on Security*, ed. Richard Lebow (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 18.

Many influential world leaders consider the global environment to be one of perpetual high conflict, whereas some see opportunities for common interests more likely.<sup>32</sup> One could probably place Vladimir Putin in the former grouping, due in no small part to his predisposed KGB-mentality. Many of Putin's remarks in this, the 21<sup>st</sup> century, could as easily have been pronounced thirty years ago on a podium under a collection of red Soviet flags. In 2012 he, like so many Soviet leaders before him, resorted to missile rhetoric, calling nuclear weapons the primary mechanism for ensured Russian security while simultaneously denouncing Russian free press reports during the 1990s that painted the armed forces in any negative light, calling such anti-military or anti-government news stories a "real moral crime and an act of treason."<sup>33</sup> The Soviet mentality equated any anti-government rhetoric as potentially treasonous, to be investigated and prosecuted by the KGB. Additional examples of Putin's KGB-mentality-inspired actions and rhetoric, specifically toward the United States, shall be offered in subsequent sections of this chapter.

## **B. YELTSIN ERA**

Vladimir Putin would witness firsthand the collapse of first the Warsaw Pact, and then the Soviet Union itself. A turbulent decade followed the surprisingly bloodless birth of the new Russian Federation. Though Putin would remain estranged from the key levers of national power and prestige until the end of the 1990s, he would, nevertheless, bear witness to a series of events internal and external to the Russian state, events in which the United States and West remained active participants. Such events would only further frustrate a Russian already so intrinsically suspicious of America and further ossify Putin's Soviet-era anti-American disposition.

### **1. Putin in the Aftermath of Collapse**

Vladimir Putin, upon leaving East Germany as the Berlin Wall collapsed, and the Cold War with it, returned to Leningrad. He accepted a KGB posting within the

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>33</sup> Vladimir Putin, "Being strong: National security guarantees for Russia," *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, February 20, 2012.

University after refusing a higher-level position at KGB headquarters in Moscow. He claimed to have recognized the futility of working in Moscow as the Soviet system slowly disintegrated and desired no part in it.<sup>34</sup> In the aftermath of the 1991 coup attempt against Gorbachev, Putin resigned from the KGB and further attached himself to a former friend and now mayor of Leningrad, Anatoly Sobchak, eventually rising to the position of deputy mayor of (renamed) St. Petersburg.<sup>35</sup> Upon Sobchak's defeat in the elections of 1996, Putin accepted a series of positions within Russian President Yeltsin's administration in Moscow, where he quickly caught the respectful eye of the aging president. Putin eventually rose to a position within the Presidential Staff, followed shortly thereafter by an appointment in July 1998 to head the Federal Security Service (FSB), the primary successor organization to the KGB, a job that Putin had recently told his wife he would never take even if offered.<sup>36</sup> Merely one year later Putin would be named acting Prime Minister of the Russian Federation and Boris Yeltsin's designated successor. But events involving the United States and Russia that occurred in the timeframe between Putin's return from Germany and his sudden placement into power at the close of the decade would permanently affect the eventual second President of the Russian Federation. These events would seem to confirm the pre-conceived notion of an inherent hostility by America toward Russia.

## **2. Russia and the West in the 1990s: U.S. as an Inadvertent Contributor to Putinist Anti-Americanism**

While working for most of the 1990s in behind-the-scenes positions in St. Petersburg city government or within the Yeltsin bureaucracy in Moscow, Putin could observe from afar the nature of post-Cold War Russian relations around the globe. Too often, the weakened Soviet successor state that became Russia was incapable of influencing global events like its superpower predecessor. The United States and West, operating in a new environment lacking any geostrategic bipolarity, engaged in actions that could only further alienate Russia and its current and future leaders. Though Putin

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<sup>34</sup> Gevorkyan, *First Person*, 68.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

could not directly affect the repeated snubbing that Yeltsin incurred from the West, the memories of how the United States and West treated a weakened Russia would affect how the next generation of Russian leaders viewed their former Cold War opponents. Of the many events in Russian-Western relations during the 1990s, several critical issues shall be examined more thoroughly, issues in which the United States and its allies inadvertently contributed to fomenting anti-Americanism in Russia and justifying anti-Americanism in the eyes of eventual President Putin.

*a. NATO*

Vladimir Putin has never hidden his general disdain for Cold War era security institutions, especially the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which was organized as a counter to Stalinist Soviet aggression. Vladimir Putin has continually affirmed that NATO's time of relevance should have died when the Red Flag came down over the Kremlin. The institution's continued existence, therefore, remains a root of contention between Russia and the West, especially the United States, given the observation that America remains the dominant motivator within NATO. Though not officially an antagonist to Russia, the dominant Soviet successor state, NATO's declared positions and actions during the decade immediately after the end of the Cold War helped exacerbated Putin's and Russia's apprehensions, apprehensions which also stem from a Cold War/KGB cognitive predisposition as discussed previously.

The 1990s would proceed and result in a legacy of tension and downright slighting of Russia at the hands of NATO. Perceived snubbing of Russia did not help in calming tensions. NATO routinely voiced support for NATO-Russian cooperation and coordination under Yeltsin, but equally consistently negated any Russian moves for true equal-partner status in settling issues pertinent to both parties. With the signing of the Founding Act in 1997 between NATO and then Russian President Yeltsin, Russian participation in NATO decision making through the new Permanent Joint Council failed to live up to the expectations many had envisioned. Though Russia had been granted a seat at the table, that table was not always in the same room where the substantive discussions were occurring. The Russian delegation to NATO, though granted

ambassadorial status, was not allowed to reside at NATO headquarters, nor given universal access to NATO meetings, nor vote or veto any NATO decision making.<sup>37</sup> A senior State Department official summed up the PJC relationship well: "...the PJC is a consultative mechanism...It does not mean a situation in which you are obliged to negotiate."<sup>38</sup> With America, the dominant NATO member, allegedly dismissing the PJC as a venue only for semantic exercise and Russia denied any real power within it, this first attempt at improved NATO-Russian relations could, therefore, be easily witnessed as an affront by NATO and the United States against Russia.

Intertwined within the issue of prospective NATO-Russian partnership were tensions over the proposed expansion of NATO into Central and Eastern Europe. In the fledgling years of Yeltsin's Russia, a pleasant relationship developed between the new Russian president and U.S. President Clinton. Yeltsin, rightly or wrongly, interpreted signals from the Clinton Administration in 1993 that implied an American willingness to accede to Russian involvement in Russia's "near abroad" just like U.S. hegemony in the Western Hemisphere. America allegedly granted the Russian Federation a sphere of influence within the former Soviet space. Such an unofficial agreement between the two leaders, with Yeltsin easing his opposition to NATO expansion in exchange for America's, and thereby NATO's, acceptance of Russian designs in Eurasia failed to materialize. By 1995, the United States had reverted from a conciliatory Russian foreign policy and called for NATO expansion regardless of Yeltsin's protests.<sup>39</sup> NATO and the United States had snubbed Russia and Yeltsin over the issue of NATO expansion once, only to be repeated again. The Russian government, under Yeltsin, tacitly acquiesced to NATO's expansion plans into Eastern and Central Europe in 1997 in exchange for what they hoped and assumed would be a seat at the table in the form of the PJC as discussed above. The envisioned partnership for Russia, however, failed to come to true fruition, while NATO's desired membership boom proceeded after the Madrid Summit of that

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<sup>37</sup> Mark Weber, James Sperling, and Martin Smith, *NATO's Post-Cold War Trajectory: Decline or Regeneration?* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 129.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 130.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 127.

same year with Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary all joining the alliance.<sup>40</sup> Russia had been slighted yet again over the issue of NATO expansion.

Hard liners in Russia found their fears vindicated when some U.S. Cold Warriors, like Henry Kissinger, asserted that NATO enlargement during the 1990s should proceed quickly not to hasten democratic development in Europe or prepare for totalitarian resurgence in Russia, but rather exploit Russia's weaknesses and gain a supreme geostrategic position on the continent.<sup>41</sup> Anti-NATO Russians, like Putin, could thereby claim that NATO enlargement had been and will continue to be an affront against Russia, to threaten the Federation just like it had done to the Soviet Union.

***b. Balkans***

As NATO expanded ever closer to the Russian homeland, the Yeltsin years also bore witness to a NATO willing to engage in alleged unilateral uses of force on the international scene, specifically in Southeast Europe during the Balkan wars spanning the 1990s. In his 2000 autobiography referencing both Kosovo and Chechnya, Putin adamantly refutes the right of any state to intercede in the internal affairs of another state, in violation of international law, even if under humanitarian auspices.<sup>42</sup> Regarding NATO, or any Western-coalition-based organization, Putin, in his infamous Munich Speech in 2007, declared it unjust for any pre-emptive military action to occur against a sovereign state without the United Nation's consent, a body that Russia has considerable leverage in. "The use of force can only be considered legitimate if the decision is sanctioned by the UN. And we do not need to substitute NATO or the EU for the UN."<sup>43</sup> Rather unsubtly, Putin intimates that Russia should have had a say and should continue to have a say in any use of force around the globe and that NATO or NATO-member states (i.e., the United States) acting otherwise cannot occur.

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 128, 130.

<sup>41</sup> Raymond Garthoff, "NATO and Russia," *The Brookings Review* 15, no. 2 (Spring 1997): 10.

<sup>42</sup> Gevorkyan, *First Person*, 138.

<sup>43</sup> Vladimir Putin, "Speech and the Following Discussion at the Munich Conference on Security Policy," February 11, 2007, <http://kremlin.ru/eng/text/speeches/2007/02/11/0138.shtml>.

Russia, with Putin in the background, observed multiple non-UN mandated uses of force in the 1990s, especially in the Balkans. During the Bosnian crisis of 1993–1995, Russian intransigence persisted within the United Nations Security Council regarding expanding the UN mandate to employ military force against the Bosnian Serbs. The impetus for a military halt to the Bosnian genocide therefore shifted to NATO, which initiated armed action against the Serbs in 1995 absent further UN (i.e. Russian) authorization.<sup>44</sup> Four years later, NATO action against Slobodan Milosevic's Yugoslavia during the Kosovo crisis serves as the quintessential case of NATO aggression absent international mandate. Once again, Yeltsin's Russia's obstruction within the UN Security Council compelled NATO to assume the mantle of primary decision making organization on the Kosovo issue.<sup>45</sup> The Yeltsin government considered NATO's effort a unilateral attack against a sovereign state that had not attacked a NATO member. NATO's reassurances that the alliance remained a purely defensive entity had been dashed.<sup>46</sup>

NATO had now effectively usurped the United Nations as the primary peacekeeping organization and “substitute” for the UN as Euro-region political arbiter.<sup>47</sup> Russian attempts to admonish NATO for their unilateral action within the international community fell flat. A Russian-submitted UN Security Council resolution declaring Operation Allied Force (NATO's Kosovo action) unlawful received only three supporting votes, two of them Russia's and China's.<sup>48</sup> Russia's power-grip and influence within the UN was now moot in light of a new U.S. dominated NATO willing to bypass the Security Council. Russia, nevertheless, continued to exercise its muscle within the UN in the aftermath. They ensured that any subsequent Kosovo-related resolutions never even

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<sup>44</sup> Ryan Hendrickson, *Diplomacy and War at NATO: The Secretary General and Military Action after the Cold War* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 2006), 51, 55.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 94–96.

<sup>46</sup> Michael Mandelbaum, “A Perfect Failure: NATO's War against Yugoslavia,” *Foreign Affairs* 78, no. 5 (Sept.-Oct., 1999), 7.

<sup>47</sup> Rama S. Kumar, “From Kosovo to Georgia: The U.S., NATO and Russia,” *Economic and Political Weekly* 43, no. 36 (Sept 2008), 25.

<sup>48</sup> Dino Kritsiotis, “The Kosovo Crisis and NATO's Application of Armed Force against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia,” *The International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 49, no. 2 (April 2000), 347.

faintly contained wording that could be construed as the international body condoning the NATO armed action. Only references to alleviating human suffering within common international laws pertaining to humanitarian interventions could pass the Security Council.<sup>49</sup> Putin extensively details the late 1990s Balkan turmoil and the NATO action against Serbia over Kosovo as a rallying cry of anti-NATO/anti-Western sentiment within Russia, given how his country was not treated as an “equal partner.”<sup>50</sup>

An enlarged NATO that remains beholden to the United States, both of which only grew stronger in the aftermath of the Soviet collapse, now proved willing to employ military force which it had not done in its entire Cold War existence. Repeated snubbing by the West toward Yeltsin’s Russia over issues of partnership and security also contributed to consternation in Russia. Though seemingly benign in the eyes of the United States and the West, is there any confusion as to how such actions might irk an already cognitively pre-disposed anti-American individual like Putin into retaining if not permanently psychologically justifying his own anti-Americanism? And then, at the end of the 1990s, the lifelong anti-American Vladimir Putin would abruptly emerge from obscurity and become the leader of Russia.

*c. Economic Collapse and the Absence of U.S. Aid*

Though a topic for a much more in depth analysis beyond the scope of this thesis, it is worthy of a brief discussion of the economic turmoil in Yeltsin’s Russia and more importantly the perceived lack of support offered by the United States to help the newfound “capitalist democracy” in achieving Yeltsin’s promised rapid recovery. Yeltsin’s “shock therapy” to the post-Soviet Russian economy failed to improve the lives of most Russians, leaving many to question the validity of U.S. styled free market capitalism and democracy which had been the basis for a temporary euphoric pro-American mood immediately after the democratic revolution.<sup>51</sup> Communism had been blamed for the rotten lives of the Soviet citizens; the United States combatted

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 358

<sup>50</sup> Gevorkyan, *First Person*, 137.

<sup>51</sup> Shiraev and Zubock, *Anti-Americanism in Russia from Stalin to Putin*, 49.



communism; therefore America and its economic and government systems must be good.<sup>52</sup> Within a few years of the Soviet collapse, people had become increasingly disillusioned with the United States. Little to no economic aid had been proffered; America had benefitted the most from the USSR's collapse and therefore a lack of aid must have been simply another means by which America kept Russia on its knees and incapable of re-asserting its former position on the world scene.<sup>53</sup>

America had thereby denied Russia an economic recovery while exploiting Russian weakness to gain a greater influence around the globe and especially in continental Europe through NATO. Putin observed and took note; the absence of U.S. aid was but one more piece of evidence supporting his anti-American pre-disposition that America was pre-disposed to antagonism toward Russia. Putin would be unable to influence the situation until nearing the turn of the next century, his century.

### **C. PUTIN: A SUDDEN THRUST INTO THE LIMELIGHT**

After a short lived tenure as head of the FSB, Putin would be strategically appointed as a Deputy Prime Minister under Yeltsin in August 1999, becoming acting Prime Minister that same day following the dismissal of the government. Vladimir Putin had suddenly become Boris Yeltsin's chosen successor to be the next President of the Russian Federation.

#### **1. Putin's Short-Lived Premiership and Acting Presidency**

Claiming to have had an unemotional reaction to his surprise appointment as Prime Minister by Yeltsin, Vladimir Putin would waste little time in defining himself to a nation in which most people had no idea who he was. Putin's several-month-long premiership would come to be dominated by one issue: the ongoing conflict in the North Caucasuses and the violent terror attacks in Russia proper.

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 144.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 53.

*a. Crisis in Chechnya*

Conflict between Russia and the North Caucasus region of Chechnya had been ongoing for decades. President Yeltsin launched an ill-fated military operation against the region in the mid-1990s with disastrous results. The operation also drew vociferous condemnation from certain segments within the United States.<sup>54</sup> As Putin came into the premiership in 1999, the Chechen conflict had spilled beyond the borders of the break-away republic. Putin, in his autobiography, again portrays himself as morally ambivalent to the potential political consequences, or benefits, of his actions toward Chechnya. He cites his appointment to Prime Minister as providing him with the opportunity to perform a “historic mission” to secure the future of the Russian Federation from an escalating succession of regional instability should Chechnya become independent.<sup>55</sup> Such a domino theory of Russian strategic integrity would remain essential in Putin’s policy decisions for the duration of his tenure in power. After a series of bombings in Moscow, to which some inside Russia and the international community point blame at government security services, Putin launched a heavy-handed military operation into Chechnya to root out the “bandits” as Putin referred to them, and subsequently restore security.<sup>56</sup>

The invasion incited quick and angry condemnation from the United States and West, with calls for international peacekeeping operations and an immediate Russian withdrawal. Putin, as Prime Minister and eventual acting President following Boris Yeltsin’s surprise resignation on December 31, 1999, repeatedly rebuffed any such attempts. Asserting Chechnya as an internal security problem outside the purview of any American, foreign, or international oversight, Putin exhorted that no state should have any right to interfere in the internal affairs of another state, again alluding to the U.S./NATO action against Yugoslavia over Kosovo.<sup>57</sup> America’s demand for involvement and consultative rights regarding this Russian internal affair could only

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>55</sup> Gevorkyan, *First Person*, 112.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 128.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 139.

provide further reinforcing proof of American designs to undermine Russia, a belief that an anti-American Putin had come to accept over the previous decades. This would not be the last time Putin employed such rhetoric toward the United States and her allies. Foreign involvement in any internal Russian affairs or criticism thereof, perceived and or fictitious as it may be, would never be ignored by Vladimir Putin.

***b. Presidential Election of 2000***

During Putin's stint as acting president and his 2000 campaign for the presidency, the Russian people's focus had come to incorporate growing security issues along with the habitual economic woes. With Kosovo still on peoples' minds and Chechnya still raging, Putin was able to tailor his message and play to peoples general nervousness to promote his goals for internal security and order and a rejection of foreign (i.e. American/Western) influences.<sup>58</sup> The success of the military operations against Chechnya and Vladimir Putin's unrelenting perseverance and strength compared to an elderly Yeltsin proved sufficient enough to propel Putin to an electoral victory in the March 2000 presidential elections. Some analysts, including Marie Mendras, also point to a general lack of credible alternatives to Putin that accounts for Putin's first round ballot victory, in conjunction with election irregularities and fraud.<sup>59</sup> Peter Baker and Susan Glasser similarly extoll the employment of Russian state resources (media) to thoroughly discredit the few potentially viable Putin alternatives on the ballot.<sup>60</sup> This would definitely not be the only time the state media would be employed as a political weapon.

Putin was inaugurated for his first full term in May. His May 2000 inauguration speech, however, contained no such anti-American or anti-foreign references, pointing instead to vague goals of a "free, prosperous, wealthy, strong, and civilized land," never mentioning Chechnya, the United States, or any other nation by

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<sup>58</sup> Marie Mendras, *Russian Politics: The Paradox of a Weak State* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 156.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>60</sup> Peter Baker and Susan Glasser, *Kremlin Rising: Vladimir Putin's Russia and the End of Revolution* (Dulles, Virginia: Potomac Books, 2007), 57.

name.”<sup>61</sup> He instead reserved most of his speech to touting the values and effectiveness of democracy that had just been demonstrated in the peaceful election and transition of power. That sentiment would evolve over the coming years and will be examined more in depth in subsequent sections of this thesis. Though subtle during his first months in the Presidency, Vladimir Putin had, nevertheless, displayed a penchant for animosity toward the United States and West, though isolated to specific instances of foreign policy disputes. Over the coming eight years of his presidency, Putin’s intrinsic anti-Americanism that seemed sporadic and insulated would become widespread and spill over beyond the isolated issues of Kosovo, Chechnya, and state sovereignty.

#### **D. PUTIN’S FIRST PRESIDENCY**

Vladimir Putin’s first full term as President of the Russian Federation proved wrought with challenges. The Chechen conflict continued, economic troubles persisted, and Russia was left to decide how it wanted to operate within the global community. This new Russian President would suddenly be forced to deal with a new American President within a world order shocked by the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and their aftermath. How could a pre-disposed anti-American Russian President cope? Could he simply place his real feelings on the back-burner and wait for an opportune time to bring them back? Or did the change in the global environment spurn a much-overdue change in prejudice? As this chapter will show, the evidence points toward the former.

Anti-American rhetoric and policy from Putin’s state would take a temporary hibernation in light of (then) current events. By the end of his first term and into his second, events would unfold that would spurn an awakening in Putin’s anti-American proclivities and provide the means to promote them to Russian society as a whole.

##### **1. Integrate *Into* or *With* the West... or Neither?**

Vladimir Putin faced several conundrums during his first years as president. One overarching problem remained unsettled from the days of Boris Yeltsin’s ascendancy to

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<sup>61</sup> Vladimir Putin, “2000 Putin Inauguration Speech,” May 7, 2000, <http://www.fas.org/news/russia/2000/000507-rus-putin.htm>.

power in the wake of the USSR's collapse. How would a newly non-Communist Russia interact with the Soviet Union's former enemies: the West (and the United States)? Noted Russian expert Dmitri Trenin posits that Yeltsin sought rapid democratization and free-market capitalization within the new Russia to affect a quick integration into Western society, effectively turning the former Soviet state into a European State on a Western model.<sup>62</sup> Though Peter the Great may have enjoyed some success in dragging Russia into an 18th century modernity by Tsarist mandate, Yeltsin's attempt to power Russia into the modern 20th century proved more problematic.

While serving as Prime Minister, Putin explicitly referred to Russia as a part of Europe, in sync with what Yeltsin had been attempting to portray for most of the 1990s.<sup>63</sup> Once president, however, Putin's stance on Russia's position vis-à-vis the West altered from Yeltsin's early 1990s fantasy. Though he would repeat the assertion that Russia was a part of Europe for several years, he concurrently emphasized Russia's goal of "integration with Europe."<sup>64</sup> Feeding off of public angst over the state of affairs at the end of the Yeltsin era, both economic and governmental, Vladimir Putin would exploit people's frustrations with Yeltsin-era economic and political dysfunction to abandon any inertia that existed to transform Russia into a Western-style state. He claimed Russia was not appropriate for such a type of democracy and government system.<sup>65</sup> Since Putin's Russia abandoned attempts to become an Americanized/Westernized state, it instead sought its own path toward democracy and economic capitalism while integrating with the West. 9/11 offered the perfect opportunity to re-assert Russia's position on the global scene and establish Russia as a critical influence in American and Western decision-making without being truly Western. As we shall see in subsequent sections, however,

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<sup>62</sup> Dmitri Trenin, *Post-Imperium: A Eurasian Story* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2011), 204–207.

<sup>63</sup> Gevorkyan, *First Person*, 131.

<sup>64</sup> Vladimir Putin, "Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation," April 18, 2002, <http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/text/speeches.shtml>; Vladimir Putin, "Speech at a Meeting of the NATO-Russia Council," May 28, 2002, <http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/text/speeches.shtml>; Vladimir Putin, interview by Patrick Poivre D'Arvor, *Channel TF-1*, February 11, 2003, <http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/text/speeches.shtml>

<sup>65</sup> Mendras, *Russian Politics: The Paradox of a Weak State*, 185.

integration and cooperation with the United States and West would not to be the end-state in Russian foreign relations, but more of a transitional stage. And Putin's natural anti-Americanism, silenced but always present, could be easily un-silenced if a non-integrationist environment should develop.

## **2. The Attacks of 9/11 and the Aftermath**

The 2001 terrorist attacks against the United States presented Russia and America with a golden opportunity to forge a new and lasting partnership. Vladimir Putin was the first international leader to phone President Bush on the day of the attacks, and in public statements that day reiterated "we are with you...we support you."<sup>66</sup> Vladimir Putin, to any observer, appeared to harbor no anti-Americanism in the aftermath of the attacks. Putin was legitimately disturbed and horrified by the attacks and even ordered the cancelation of an ongoing Russian military exercise in the Pacific that day so as not to distract and burden U.S. forces beyond the unfolding crisis.<sup>67</sup> Putin, however, would seize on the nature of the attacks and continually parallel Russia's ongoing conflict with Chechnya on similar terms as the new war against terrorism. Such notions were disputed outside Russia where Chechen terrorist attacks have been attributed to Russian brutality in Chechnya over the years.<sup>68</sup> Over the ensuing months (and years) he claimed that Russians "entirely and fully share and experience your pain," and "Chechnya cannot be viewed out of the context of the fight against international terrorism."<sup>69</sup>

Vladimir Putin, in addition to repeated rhetorical proclamations in support of U.S. post-9/11 efforts, initiated policy actions beyond what any cold-warrior thought possible. Against the opposition of his own military establishment, Putin acceded to U.S. military presence in Central Asia to conduct operations against the Taliban.<sup>70</sup> He re-asserted the

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<sup>66</sup> Vladimir Putin, "Statement on Terrorist Attacks in the USA," September 11, 2001, <http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/text/speeches.shtml>.

<sup>67</sup> Baker and Glasser, *Kremlin Rising*, 122.

<sup>68</sup> Jim Nichol, "Russian Political, Economic, and Security Issues and U.S. Interests," Congressional Research Service 7-5700 (December 21, 2012), 19.

<sup>69</sup> Putin, "Statement on Terrorist Attacks in the USA;" Vladimir Putin, "Russian President's Statement," September 24, 2001, <http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/text/speeches.shtml>.

<sup>70</sup> Baker and Glasser, *Kremlin Rising*, 132.

freedom of former Soviet Central Asian states to establish U.S. military bases on their territory.<sup>71</sup> He promised intelligence sharing on Afghanistan and logistical over flight authorization for operations in Afghanistan as well as Russian cooperation with a post-Taliban government.<sup>72</sup> During the short interim period of the Bush administration before the attacks, the dominant issue concerning bilateral relations between America and Russia was ballistic missile defense; Bush and Putin were even able to reach equitable terms on this issue in light of the new atmosphere of global anti-terror cooperation. Putin agreed to “liberalize” the ABM treaty to allow continued U.S. testing of BMD components, though not deployment, and eventually accepted U.S. withdrawal from the treaty without incurring a diplomatic crisis. Bush, in 2002, agreed to sign the Treaty of Moscow regarding additional nuclear arms reductions solely because he recognized Putin’s domestic necessity in having an official piece of paper vice relying on the words of two mutual friends.<sup>73</sup> The dynamics of the Putin-Bush friendship shall be discussed further in the next section.

It seemed that a new era of Russian-American friendship and partnership had come to fruition, and it only required a cataclysmic upheaval in the geostrategic paradigm for it to occur, namely 9/11. One cannot take anything for its face value. While paralleling Russian and American concerns, claiming Russian and American anti-terror interests simpatico, walking the walk, and talking the talk of a new era in American-Russian relations, Putin and his cadre never stopped keeping a tab on Russia’s assistance to the United States. Putin in November 2001 reiterated the allegedly genuinely altruistic nature of Russia’s cooperation in the Global War on Terror: “Russia is not expecting any preferences or any payment for its position for the support of your country in combating terrorism.”<sup>74</sup> Baker and Glasser contend that Russia’s continued cooperation hinged on the United States “returning the favor,” to include additional foreign investment, repeal of

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<sup>71</sup> Putin, “Russian President’s Statement,” September 24, 2001.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Baker and Glasser, *Kremlin Rising*, 136–137.

<sup>74</sup> Vladimir Putin, interview by Barbara Walters, 2020, ABC News, November 6, 2001, <http://abcnews.go.com/2020/story?id=123996&page=1&singlePage=true>.

the Jackson-Vanik trade amendment, debt forgiveness, WTO entry, delayed or halted NATO expansion if not even Russian admittance into the alliance, mutually acceptable accords on the ABM treaty and BMD, and a cessation of Western criticism of Russian actions in Chechnya and the implicit recognition by America the Chechnya was indeed a front within the larger Global War on Terror.<sup>75</sup> Putin, in effect, wanted total Russian integration *with* the West.<sup>76</sup>

What would happen if Putin's desired integration and equal partnership with the United States and West failed to occur? What if the unofficial score card continued to eschew in America's favor? Putin's pre-held assumptions about perpetual U.S. exploitation of Russian weakness and treachery in the face of perceived Russian good will would soon have new supporting evidence, spurning a return to a default Putin, a Putin willing to publically demonstrate his anti-Americanism. As alluded to earlier, Vladimir Putin's grade school teachers recognized his proclivity to harness long-lasting grudges over perceived betrayals of trust and loyalty. Putin in his autobiography personally details the "cruel but fair" treatment rendered upon one of his friends for not cooperating in pooling food money during a trip, only to be denied any food later.<sup>77</sup> Putin does not forgive those who do not cooperate, and his pre-disposed hostility toward America, though at best muted during the immediate 9/11 aftermath, would soon become patently obvious over the later phase of his first presidential term. An international friendship among two men would be tested and one man's nation's aspirations of integration with the west would be dashed. Putin's inherent anti-Americanism would provide an excellent vehicle to demonstrate a new distancing of himself and Russian society from his short-lived friend: America.

### **3. Brotherly Love: Putin and Bush**

Though Vladimir Putin rose to the Russian Presidency in the twilight of President Bill Clinton's administration, the two world leaders never truly clicked. Mutual distrust

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<sup>75</sup> Baker and Glasser, *Kremlin Rising*, 133.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 134.

<sup>77</sup> Gevorkyan, *First Person*, 21.



overshadowed all of their interactions. Baker and Glasser attribute much of Putin's standoffishness to the perceived series of betrayals inflicted upon Russia by the United States during the 1990s, as discussed in previous sections.<sup>78</sup> The Putin team was cautiously optimistic about starting a new relationship with the incoming Bush administration. Unfortunately, the only significant issue Bush wanted to address with Putin was American BMD development and the system's incorporation within any renewal of the ABM treaty.<sup>79</sup> Putin's Kremlin, annoyed over such a narrow bilateral agenda, could only continue a non-productive but cordial relationship like that with Clinton. During their first bilateral summit in Slovenia in June 2001, Bush made his famous statement in which he "looked the man in the eye...found him to be very straight forward and... was able to get a sense of his soul." But substantive progress beyond international flattery was not to in the cards. Then 9/11 happened.

In the aftermath of the Al Qaeda attacks, the bilateral relationship between the United States and Russia appeared to shift like few thought possible. Putin's Russia, hoping to fully integrate with the Western community, initiated a series of policy actions as detailed previously. The relationship between Bush and Putin, too, flowered into something rarely-before seen on the global scene. Any semblance of anti-Americanism in Putin's Kremlin, from Russia proper, and in most of the non-Muslim world seemed to subside. But global sympathy for the United States after the attacks remained temporary and largely superficial.<sup>80</sup> Russia and the Kremlin were no different. America was still accruing a hefty tab in exchange for Putin's and Russia's ongoing cooperation. Desiring to be a true "strategic ally of the entire civilized community including the United States," Putin in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks often made subtle jabs at the United States and Western world not only over admission of Chechnya within the Global War on Terror, but also for not fully integrating Russia earlier within anti-terror efforts and strategic

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<sup>78</sup> Baker and Glasser, *Kremlin Rising*, 126.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 127.

<sup>80</sup> Fouad Ajami, "The Falseness of Anti-Americanism," *Foreign Policy*, no. 138 (Sept.-Oct., 2003): 57.

cooperation.<sup>81</sup> Overshadowing Putin's veiled prods, nevertheless, was a never ending oratory of praise and commendation toward George W. Bush, attributing the Russian-American relationship to President Bush. Putin says he trusts Bush to live up to any promises made.<sup>82</sup> Bush repeatedly reciprocates; the easing of tensions not just between the United States and Russia, but also NATO and Russia, is a "tribute" to Putin's leadership; "Russia is our friend, not our enemy."<sup>83</sup>

Perhaps the most iconic images of the early friendship between the two presidents emanated from their November 2001 vacation at Bush's Texas ranch. The developing relationship between the United States and Russia and Bush and Putin, according to Baker and Glasser, paralleled that between FDR and Churchill during World War II.<sup>84</sup> Such a relationship between two very different nations based on trust, cooperation, and information sharing between their two respective leaders could only persist if both leaders remained loyal to the relationship. As we shall see, the United States largely failed to live up to Putin's reciprocity expectations; the U.S.-Russian tab would never be repaid, and Putin's default state of acrimony toward America would return; anti-Americanism in Russia and from Putin was about to become much more apparent; the hibernation was over.

#### **4. Iraq and a Sudden Turn Against America?**

According to Dmitri Trenin, Putin's flirtation with a full Russian integration with America and the West was, at best, short lived. Within a year of 9/11, as Bush and Putin's friendship reached new bounds, Putin's subsequent efforts for an even greater strategic alignment met a cold shoulder as Bush and America shifted focus to a potential military strike upon Saddam Hussein's Iraq.<sup>85</sup> Vocally opposed to military strikes against Iraq as early as November 2001, Putin asserts the world's efforts must be in

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<sup>81</sup> Putin, interview by Barbara Walters, November 6, 2001.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Vladimir Putin and George W. Bush, "Joint Press Conference with U.S. President George W. Bush," May 24, 2002, <http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/text/speeches.shtml>.

<sup>84</sup> Baker and Glasser, *Kremlin Rising*, 135.

<sup>85</sup> Trenin, *Post-Imperium: A Eurasian Story*, 207.

peacefully resuming U.N. weapons inspections in Iraq, and that bombing would solve nothing, sentiments he continued to echo into late 2002 at meetings between himself and Bush.<sup>86</sup> Putin's failure to influence American decision-making over the Iraq invasion was not the sole reason for renewed Putinist anti-American displays.

As the U.S. attack grew imminent, Putin's rhetoric changed into outright denouncement of any unilateral action against Iraq: "we believe that the use of force, especially unilateral use of force, is absolutely inadmissible." He further warned that the U.S. attack on Iraq could negatively affect the cohesion of the global coalition fighting terrorism.<sup>87</sup> Putin's continual admonition of any non-U.N. mandated (i.e. Putin authorized) use of force in Iraq grew more heated after meeting with French and German leaders in February 2003, saying any attack would be a "grave error," even alluding to a multipolar division of the world with the United States on one side and Russia and Europe on the other.<sup>88</sup>

In the aftermath of the invasion, Putin's rhetoric hardened even further, aggressively denouncing America's non-internationally mandated use force as a "law of the fist."<sup>89</sup> As he had been preaching in the run-up to the war, Putin repeatedly denounced any affront to the U.N.'s primary role in international disputes, a body that Russia has considerable leverage in: "the central role in resolving the crisis situations in the world, including the situation around Iraq, must belong to the U.N. security council."<sup>90</sup> Rather unobtusely, Putin intimates that Russia should have a say in any use of force around the globe. Within a month of the invasion, Putin condemned the United States for the ongoing security and humanitarian crisis in Iraq, as well as the illegitimacy of the invasion given the fact that no weapons of mass destruction had been uncovered.

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<sup>86</sup> Putin, interview by Barbara Walters, November 6, 2001; Putin and Bush, "Joint Press Conference with U.S. President George W. Bush," May 24, 2002.

<sup>87</sup> Vladimir Putin, "Transcript of a Meeting with French Regional Press and TV Channels," February 12, 2003, <http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/text/speeches.shtml>.

<sup>88</sup> Baker and Glasser, *Kremlin Rising*, 225.

<sup>89</sup> Vladimir Putin, "Statement on Iraq at a Kremlin Meeting," March 20, 2003, <http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/text/speeches.shtml>.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

He also alludes to a dangerous new 21<sup>st</sup> century “colonialism” regarding the U.S. mission in Iraq as well as the futility of “exporting a capitalist, democratic revolution.”<sup>91</sup>

Though Putin was not hesitant to show his public opposition to America’s war against Iraq, he never backed away from continually emphasizing his good relationship with President Bush, which he reiterated again, and again, and again while promising continued cooperation with Russia’s “American friends” on issues of mutual importance.<sup>92</sup> But those issues of mutual importance were becoming fewer and fewer. Putin’s Kremlin initially silenced overly-critical media reports and anti-American dissent by Russian government officials over the Iraq war because, as Baker and Glasser contend, Putin was not willing to permanently ruin his relationship with Bush over Iraq, which Putin deemed a “distraction.”<sup>93</sup>

As recently as December 2012, Putin credited the U.S.-Russian rift over Iraq as the turning point in bilateral relations “which then soured and deteriorated.”<sup>94</sup> But in reality, the United States and George W. Bush had, in Putin’s mind, not effectively reciprocated Russia’s shows of support after 9/11. The attack on Iraq and the sidestepping of international jurisdiction (i.e. Russian sway) that it epitomized represented only one instance thereof. Bush had promised to work with Congress in repealing the Jackson-Vanik trade restrictions.<sup>95</sup> The amendment remained. Trade negotiations between the two states had resorted to a climate of eye-for-an-eye, with Bush implementing steel tariffs and Putin responding with poultry embargos, claiming America was intentionally selling Russians tainted chicken.<sup>96</sup> NATO expansion further into Eastern Europe was all-but-inevitable. The new NATO-Russia Council, or NRC, failed to live up to Putin’s

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<sup>91</sup> Vladimir Putin, “Excerpts from Press Conference Following Talks with German Federal Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and French President Jacques Chirac,” April 11, 2003, <http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/text/speeches.shtml>.

<sup>92</sup> Putin, interview by Patrick Poivre D’Arvor, *Channel TF-1*, February 11, 2003.

<sup>93</sup> Baker and Glasser, *Kremlin Rising*, 229.

<sup>94</sup> Vladimir Putin, “News Conference of Vladimir Putin,” December 20, 2012, <http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/text/speeches.shtml>.

<sup>95</sup> Putin and Bush, “Joint Press Conference with U.S. President George W. Bush,” May 24, 2002.

<sup>96</sup> Baker and Glasser, *Kremlin Rising*, 220.

expectations, and subtle demands, of partnership based on equality. The Russian delegation was still not given universal access, could be barred from any discussions at the request of any member, and routinely faced an already backroom-orchestrated and united NATO-member coalition before the NRC convened.<sup>97</sup> Increases in U.S. economic development aid to Russia were not forthcoming. American BMD development proceeded. Russia, and Putin, found themselves shut-out of the much-desired integration with the West. Putin had been snubbed by the United States, and as we have seen, perceived disloyalty and a refusal to cooperate are not easily forgotten by Vladimir Putin. Putin's and Russia's anti-American animosity, temporarily subsided or hidden in the 9/11 aftermath, was returning and Iraq was only one of many straws that broke that camel's back, though the most visible and therefore most publically exploitable.

## **5. Elections of 2003 and 2004**

America became ever-more bogged down in Iraq and U.S.-Russian bilateral relations seemed at loggerheads over a host of issues, but cordiality remained owing to the continued friendship of Bush and Putin. That friendship seemed to return to pre-Iraq war levels by the autumn of 2003, where Bush and Putin again met at Camp David. Bush praised Putin for his management of Russian democracy and society, a practical endorsement of Putin's re-election, though seemingly ignorant of the reality of Putin's regime, according to Baker and Glasser.<sup>98</sup> Elections in Russia for the Duma and President occurred at the end of 2003 and early 2004, respectively. Much more detail shall be offered over the nature and intricacies of Russian elections in Chapter III. Suffice it to say, anti-Western politicians and leaders, according to Stephen Wegren and Dale Herspring, had largely lay "dormant" during the Yeltsin years, only to be re-awakened during the Putin years.<sup>99</sup> A growing chorus of Russian politicians, silenced by Putin's Kremlin during the run-up to and invasion of Iraq, had become increasingly more critical

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<sup>97</sup> Weber, Sperling, and Smith, *NATO's Post-Cold War Trajectory: Decline or Regeneration?*, 135.

<sup>98</sup> Baker and Glasser, *Kremlin Rising*, 230.

<sup>99</sup> Stephen Wegren and Dale Herspring, "Conclusion," in *After Putin's Russia*, ed Stephen Wegren and Dale Herspring, (Plymouth: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2010), 296.

of America as election season dawned, and Putin and his Kremlin machine did not strive to silence them anymore.

Putin's campaign rhetoric largely refrained from overt anti-Americanism, instead emphasizing domestic concerns with only subtle references to U.S. efforts to "increase their zones of strategic influence" by use of military superiority.<sup>100</sup> Putin's inauguration speech makes no reference to the United States but rather lays down vague goals of a Russia "strengthening its positions in the international arena and capable of upholding, by peaceful means, its legitimate interests in the rapidly changing world."<sup>101</sup> Based on Putin's statements, he no longer used rhetoric alluding to full integration with the West. He would rather seek a position of equality with the West and a resurgence of Russian influence in the world on par with that of the Soviet Union, rather than just being the United States' and West's junior partner. A "default...great power mentality" was surpassing any further integrationist visions.<sup>102</sup> That default mentality, one harkening to Soviet times, implied a renewed global competition within a non-unipolar world. Putin's Russia, therefore, would now have to distance itself from the United States and West as well as challenge the United States' dominance on the global scene, a role that Putin and his cadre were well conditioned to perform due to their pre-disposed confrontational nature toward America and the West. Anti-American rhetoric and policy would help create the distance and also revive and or propagate anti-American animosity among the Russian society. Simultaneously, continued authoritarian reforms would help harden Putin's control and restore Russian power.

## **E. PUTIN'S SECOND PRESIDENCY**

Vladimir Putin coasted to re-election and a second presidential term in the spring of 2004 "aided" by his ever evolving authoritarian machine, which will be detailed in Chapter III. Suffice it to say, during Putin's first term, Russia had experienced an

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<sup>100</sup> Vladimir Putin, "Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation," May 16, 2003, <http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/text/speeches.shtml>.

<sup>101</sup> Vladimir Putin, "Putin's Inauguration Speech," *RIA Novosti*, May 7, 2004, <http://en.rian.ru/onlinenews/20040507/39915756.html>.

<sup>102</sup> Trenin, *Post-Imperium: A Eurasian Story*, 207.

economic and political stabilization, reversing many of the destructive trends of the Yeltsin era. Russia was stronger with Putin at the helm than at any time since the Cold War. Putinist anti-Americanism had been sparse and rarely observed during his first years in office, but still an underlying critical element of his mentality. It was simply sent into temporary hibernation in the wake of 9/11. But Russian bears always awake from hibernation eventually. Putin's second term would bear witness to an ever-more obvious trend: a revival of anti-Americanism across the spectrum of Russian society, led by a pre-disposed anti-American Russian President now even more embittered over the perceived slighting wrought upon him by the United States and her allies in the wake of proclaimed Russian altruism after 9/11. Events in U.S.-Russian relations would provide the backdrop of this revival, but in reality would only be scapegoats to justify an animosity long-since entrenched but becoming increasingly politically expedient.

### **1. Shift from the West**

Rooted in a hoped-for unprecedented bilateral relationship with the United States and President George W. Bush, Putin unsuccessfully attempted to fully integrate Russia with the West on the geostrategic level during his first term. In light of that failure and perceived shunning by the United States, Putin, according to Dmitri Trenin, lapsed into a "default option of behaving as an independent great power," focusing on hegemonic influence in Eurasia and becoming or maintaining a position as one of several multipolar global power centers equal to the United States, Europe, and emerging China.<sup>103</sup> No longer desiring full integration with the West, and with increased Russian material and economic power in his back pocket, in his second term, Putin could now embark on a much more assertive stance and foreign policy, especially toward the United States and West. He still stopped short of overt confrontation.<sup>104</sup> Distancing himself from all things American and Western would necessitate attacking things deemed American and Western; anti-Americanism would be employed as a rallying cry to the Russian nation to

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 236.

<sup>104</sup> Andrei Tsygankov, "Russia's Foreign Policy," in *After Putin's Russia*, ed Stephen Wegren and Dale Herspring, (Plymouth: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2010), 223.

justify further distance between Russia and the nations they once sought to emulate. Putin renewed late-Yeltsin-era rhetoric, in which he claimed America and the West sought to keep Russia perpetually weak and dependent.<sup>105</sup> To demonstrate Russia's, and his own, independence and parity with the United States and the West, Putin employed increasingly critical anti-American oratory, backed by increasingly quarrelsome anti-American policies.

## **2. America Inadvertently Plays into Putin's Hand**

The United States and its Western allies grew increasingly adept at providing the fodder to easily inflame the anti-Americanism of a paranoid Vladimir Putin, even though such fodder would appear benign by Western standards. Though most logical Western observers find it a scurrilous notion that there currently exists a U.S.-led global coalition to oust President Putin or destroy the Russian Federation, Putin possesses a Soviet-era KGB mentality and does truly believe such things. His anti-American cognitive predisposition to view events and U.S. actions through the lens of natural American hostility toward himself and Russia would result in further mental self-justification for his entrenched anti-Americanism. As Robert Jervis notes, "people frequently fail to realize that evidence that is consistent with their hypothesis may also be consistent with other views" and they, therefore, "see evidence that conforms to their hypothesis as confirming it."<sup>106</sup> Putin would bear witness to events that started late in his first term that would seem to conform to his pre-disposed hypothesis: that America seeks a Russian collapse, whether through NATO, American unilateralism, ballistic missile defenses, western-"instigated" upheaval on Russia's near-abroad, or western meddling within Russia proper. Anti-American fears, thereby, were "confirmed" and could now be fully exploited, garnering political benefit.

Fears of an American hegemon persisted to this day, twenty years after the Berlin Wall came crashing down. During Putin's now infamous 2007 Munich speech, he

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<sup>105</sup> Vladimir Putin, "Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation," May 26, 2004, <http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/text/speeches.shtml>.

<sup>106</sup> Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, 182.



claimed to bear witnesses to a global environment that was increasingly aligning and conforming closer and closer to the United States' interpretations of acceptable legal norms and perceptions of international law.<sup>107</sup> And a fear of an American hegemon that once again dominated Europe became routinely employed in Kremlin talking points claiming that "Putin is the only leader left in Europe who has not been run over by a steamroller of American hegemony."<sup>108</sup> A former Russian NATO ambassador went so far as to claim that "Russia today faces dangers similar to those during the Russian Revolution and World War II."<sup>109</sup> The Russian Revolutionary threat he alludes to was that of internal civil war and insurrection within the fledgling Bolshevik state by anti-Bolshevik White forces with Western backing. The World War II threat represents a massive invasion or geopolitical encirclement by potentially hostile entities, namely Nazi Germany (and Imperial Japan).

*a. NATO*

A U.S.-led European based threat emerged to seemingly threaten Russia with just such an encroachment/encirclement: NATO. Vladimir Putin publically referred to ongoing NATO expansion into Eastern Europe as a "serious provocation," specifically citing NATO and U.S. frontline bases in close proximity to the Russian territory.<sup>110</sup> The Berlin Wall in Putin's mind, therefore, may have simply been transplanted to the new NATO eastern border of the former Warsaw Pact states, in effect creating another dividing line. He further denounces NATO expansion as unnecessary and counterproductive to combatting the current global threats of terrorism.<sup>111</sup> In 2005, given the Baltic States' recent admittance to the alliance, Putin issued veiled warnings toward those nations about respecting the rights of ethnic Russians, inferring consequences from

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<sup>107</sup> Vladimir Putin, "Speech and the Following Discussion at the Munich Conference on Security Policy," February 11, 2007, [http://kremlin.ru/eng/text/speeches/2007/02/11/0138\\_type82914type84779\\_118135.shtml](http://kremlin.ru/eng/text/speeches/2007/02/11/0138_type82914type84779_118135.shtml).

<sup>108</sup> Alan Cullison, "Kremlin Resorts to Anti-Americanism," *The Wall Street Journal*, February 6, 2012, <http://search.proquest.com.libproxy.nps.edu/docview/919828018>.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Putin, "Speech and the Following Discussion at the Munich Conference on Security Policy."

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

Russia if such demands were not adhered to.<sup>112</sup> Taken at face value, Putin threatened Russian military intervention in the Baltics under the guise of protecting the Russian ethnic minorities. And the possibility of Ukraine joining NATO in the aftermath of the Orange revolution drew an equally hostile threat from Putin. In 2008 he threatened the retargeting of Russian ICBMs against Ukraine should they join the alliance.<sup>113</sup>

Putin's regime did not protest the establishment of U.S. military bases in Central Asia after the 9/11 attacks.<sup>114</sup> Those bases, nevertheless, in conjunction with the new eastern "border" of NATO can be construed by Putin as something akin to the start of a territorial encirclement. Regarding NATO, or any Western-coalition-based organization (ie: European Union), Putin declared it unjust for any pre-emptive military action to occur against a sovereign state without the United Nation's consent, a body that Russia has considerable leverage in. "The use of force can only be considered legitimate if the decision is sanctioned by the U.N. And we do not need to substitute NATO or the EU for the U.N."<sup>115</sup> As he had unsubtly intimated for years, Putin once again exhorts that Russia should have an input on any military action by any party on planet Earth.

#### ***b. The Future of U.S. Unilateralism***

NATO use of force pales in comparison to perceptions of United States' unilateralism in fomenting anti-American hatred within Putin's Kremlin. Putin exhorted that unilateral uses of force have failed to alleviate any geostrategic problems and "have caused new human tragedies and created new centers of tension."<sup>116</sup> Without a doubt, Putin alluded to Iraq and more broadly to most U.S. actions under the Global War on Terror umbrella. He initially condemned America's resorting to a "rule of the fist" by

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<sup>112</sup> Vladimir Putin, "Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation," April 15, 2005, <http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/text/speeches.shtml>.

<sup>113</sup> Vladimir Putin, "Transcript of Annual Big Press Conference," February 17, 2008, <http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/text/speeches.shtml>.

<sup>114</sup> John O'Loughlin, Gearoid Tuathail, and Vladimir Kolossov, "A 'Risky Westward Turn'? Putin's 9–11 Script and Ordinary Russians," *Europe-Asia Studies* 56, no.1 (January, 2004): 3.

<sup>115</sup> Putin, "Speech and the Following Discussion at the Munich Conference on Security Policy."

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

attacking Iraq and thereby violating the principles of state sovereignty.<sup>117</sup> He would continue to criticize the anarchic security, political, and humanitarian situation in Iraq in the years after the initial assault, again denouncing America's perceived attempt to export Western democracy and the lack of WMDs uncovered.<sup>118</sup>

As the international community braced for what seemed like another U.S. strike, this time against Iran, Putin, in 2007, went so far as to accuse unnamed peoples within the U.S. administration and intelligence community of being pathological liars regarding alleged intelligence proof of Iranian nuclear development.<sup>119</sup> Putin would, nevertheless, continue to emphasize his wonderful relationship with George W. Bush, even as their two respective countries butted heads increasingly frequently on a host of issues. Putin still referred to Bush as a "reliable and consistent person," a "reliable partner" and "man of honor."<sup>120</sup> Putin's vocal anti-Americanism had not yet become parallel anti-Bushism, though he outwardly attacked most actions made by the Bush administration.

*c. BMD*

Once the pre-eminent issue of U.S.-Russian bilateral relations before 9/11, Vladimir Putin's hostility toward further American BMD development would reach fever pitch, returning this issue to the forefront in U.S.-Russian affairs. Putin remained cognitively convinced that the United States was willing to engage in overt pre-emptive military action, like in Iraq. Combined with the presumption that America remains the prime orchestrator within NATO, such a superior conventional military juggernaut poses a serious threat to the security of the Russian state. Only Russia's nuclear deterrent represents an effective counter. Given such culminating paranoia, it is easy to understand Putin's apprehension about a U.S. sponsored ballistic missile defense system in NATO

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<sup>117</sup> Putin, "Statement on Iraq at a Kremlin Meeting," March 20, 2003

<sup>118</sup> Vladimir Putin, interview by Mike Wallace, *CBS News*, May 9, 2005, <http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/text/speeches.shtml>.

<sup>119</sup> Vladimir Putin, "Putin Q&A," *Time*, December 19, 2007, <http://content.time.com/time/specials/2007.html>.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*; Putin, interview by Mike Wallace, *CBS News*, May 9, 2005.

Europe and why American insistence on it only endorses his anti-American cognitive pre-disposition: an inherently antagonistic America. Today, as during the turbulent 1990s, Putin firmly believes that Russia's strategic deterrent capability "enabled us to maintain our national sovereignty."<sup>121</sup> By refusing to accept Iran as possessing a viable missile threat to Europe, he diplomatically questions the necessity of such a European missile shield, claiming its deployment could trigger another unwanted geopolitically destabilizing arms race. Russia would then be required to further develop an asymmetric, more cost-effective counter to the American missile shield, namely improved missile capability. Meanwhile, he publically acknowledges that the U.S. missile shield and Russia's new Topol-M missile systems are not directed toward Russian and U.S. forces respectively.<sup>122</sup> Putin re-iterates that American deployment of an arsenal of such "destabilizing weapons" harkens back to a previously abandoned "old bloc mentality" during an "era of global confrontation."<sup>123</sup>

His perception of the actual BMD threat results directly from his cognitive predisposition toward the United States: they cannot be trusted and are inherently hostile to Russia. Russia's military intelligence network is predisposed to provide worst-case scenario analysis; its military high command is predisposed to employ such biased analysis as justification for increased defense spending. It is, therefore, understandable why Putin's Kremlin's official concern regarding a U.S. missile shield is that it is designed to nullify Russia's nuclear deterrent against any pre-emptive American/NATO nuclear or conventional strike, making Russia a potential victim of "military blackmail."<sup>124</sup> More realistic calculations of actual U.S. military capability have long been offered by the Russian (and Soviet) diplomatic corps.<sup>125</sup> Putin, as the sole

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<sup>121</sup> Vladimir Putin, "Being strong: National security guarantees for Russia," *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, February 20, 2012.

<sup>122</sup> Putin, "Speech and the Following Discussion at the Munich Conference on Security Policy."

<sup>123</sup> Vladimir Putin, "Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation," May 10, 2006, <http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/text/speeches.shtml>.

<sup>124</sup> Mikhail Tsypkin, "Russia, America and Missile Defense," *Defense and Security Analysis* 28, no. 1 (March 2012), 56–58.

<sup>125</sup> Mikhail Tsypkin, "Russian politics, policy-making and American missile defense," *International Affairs* 85, no. 4 (2009): 788.

orchestrator of state foreign policy, nevertheless, prefers to adhere to intelligence estimates that conform to his cognitive predispositions and thereby provide additional fodder to fuel his and his nation's anti-Americanism.

*d. Western Turn by Former Constituent States*

The Kremlin's strategic insecurity and anti-American fears of a U.S./Western coalition encroaching upon Russian sovereignty were only exacerbated during the color revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine and those countries' subsequent rapprochement toward the West and ongoing petitions to join NATO.<sup>126</sup> The United States was already engaged in arms sales to former Soviet states with histories of anti-Russianism, like Georgia and Azerbaijan, which Putin's Kremlin deems provocative and potentially destabilizing.<sup>127</sup> So a U.S.-led NATO military alliance between Ukraine and Georgia would effectively complete the perceived territorial encirclement of the Russian Federation. The color revolutions, starting with the Rose Revolution in Georgia in 2003, the Orange rendition in Ukraine in late 2004, and the Tulip version in Kyrgyzstan in 2005 were all perpetrated by the United States, or so alleged Vladimir Putin.<sup>128</sup> Just as the west attempted to interfere in the Bolshevik revolution, if the United States can orchestrate the ouster of Russian-friendly governments in those states, Putin remains psychologically convinced that America and its grand coalition will attempt to oust him from leadership as well, thereby further legitimizing and confirming his historical anti-Americanism.

In 2004, in the midst of the color revolutionary epoch, Putin makes reference to non-political organizations within Russia with ties to foreign states or interests inherently unfriendly to Russia and its people. He also echoed the need for a strong and modernized military to protect the state from external military aggression, but now including external political pressure as well.<sup>129</sup> In 2006, he intimated that without

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<sup>126</sup> Andrei Tsygankov, "Russia's Foreign Policy," in *After Putin's Russia*, ed Stephen Wegren and Dale Herspring, (Plymouth: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2010), 225.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 230.

<sup>128</sup> Cullison, "Kremlin Resorts to Anti-Americanism."

<sup>129</sup> Putin, "Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation," May 26, 2004.

drastic military improvements and expenditures, a “wolf” (i.e., the United States) could easily “eat” Russia up based on the disparity in defense spending between the two states.<sup>130</sup> By 2007, he overtly accuses an “influx of money from abroad being used to intervene directly in our internal affairs,” a modern day imperialist bent under the guise of “democratization...to ensure unilateral gains and one’s own advantage.”<sup>131</sup> The “one” he alludes to is the United States. Such remarks play upon the historical fears of Russians toward external enemies. Putin’s employment of anti-Americanism in his domestic realm was taking shape.

### **3. Critical Reciprocity? Attack on Those who Criticize Him**

Putin also stepped up his retaliatory rhetoric against those who would criticize a plethora of aspects of his emerging Russian society. Putin became increasingly defensive about international criticism of his handling of domestic affairs and the nature of his regime. Insidious to Putin were American criticisms of Russia’s positions on civil liberties under the auspices of questions concerning free-market and free trade economics. Putin rails against Western assertions that foreign companies were not given due rights to Russian energy resources and markets, and that Russia was the butt of too much criticism regarding their laws on free speech and equal rights during their WTO accession proceedings.<sup>132</sup>

With the ongoing criticism of Russian domestic culture as somehow less-than-democratic compared to the allegedly superior democratic systems in America and Europe, Putin was forced to respond. Putin loathes the notion that Russia must constantly be “taught about democracy,” and therefore equally criticizes over-inflated examples of supposed undemocratic policies in the west.<sup>133</sup> He cites the U.S. electoral college as undemocratic compared to his elections by direct popular vote, using the 2000 U.S. Supreme Court Bush vs. Gore ruling as evidence of the imperfect nature of American

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<sup>130</sup> Putin, “Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation,” May 10, 2006.

<sup>131</sup> Vladimir Putin, “Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation,” April 26, 2007, <http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/text/speeches.shtml>.

<sup>132</sup> Putin, “Speech and the Following Discussion at the Munich Conference on Security Policy.”

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

democracy.<sup>134</sup> Those with imperfect democracies, by his reckoning, have no right to criticize Russian democracy.

To those who criticize Russian human rights abuses, he also preaches the alleged hypocrisy of the United States and West. Regarding Russian persecution of free journalists, Putin alleges that anti-Bush American journalists and those opposed to the Iraq war were fired for their positions and election coverage, referring to Dan Rather of CBS.<sup>135</sup> He also exploits U.S. human rights violations, specifically prisoner detainees and interrogation or torture scandals. These instances are utilized within the context of broader U.S. counterterrorism policies, which all became extremely unpopular in Russia.<sup>136</sup> Putin's domestic audience had grown increasingly worried about American actions in recent years, allowing Putin to exploit those concerns by trumping up more evidence of American impropriety, all with an obvious anti-American flavor.

Toward the end of Putin's second term, the vociferousness of his anti-Americanism could be seen. Blame or culpability on a host of issues was being leveled toward the United States, the West, and their supposed proxies within Russia. Continual criticism of his regime and Russian society from the United States had become, according to Putin, the main problem in Russian-American relations.<sup>137</sup> Such criticism, deemed unfounded by Putin, was allegedly being orchestrated by those in power in the United States to negatively alter the American and global public's impression of Russia so as to gain increased geopolitical leverage, though once again he refrains from directly accusing his "friend" President Bush.<sup>138</sup> In turn, anti-American criticism from Putin could be seen as having a direct effect on his public's perceptions of America. As we shall see in the subsequent chapter, a government's manipulation of public opinion is not an alien notion to Vladimir Putin. Putin's constitutional hold on the Russian Presidency, however, was

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<sup>134</sup> Putin, interview by Mike Wallace, *CBS News*, May 9, 2005

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Mendleson, "Us and Them: Anti-American Views of the Putin Generation," 146; Sarah Mendelson and Theodore Gerber, "Young Russia's Enemy No. 1: Anti-Americanism Grows," *The Washington Post*, August 3, 2007, sec. A15, <http://www.washingtonpost.com>.

<sup>137</sup> Putin, "Putin Q&A," *Time*, December 19, 2007

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

coming to an end, albeit temporarily. His hold on Russia itself, however, would continue along with his newfound, or more appropriately, resurfaced anti-Americanism.

## **F. PRESIDENT TO PUPPETMASTER AND BACK AGAIN: PUTIN'S RECENT PREMIERSHIP AND RETURN TO THE PRESIDENCY**

Vladimir Putin, in accordance with the Russian constitution, did not pursue election to a third consecutive term in 2008, preferring instead to become Prime Minister under his handpicked presidential successor, Dmitri Medvedev. Though officially removed from supreme executive power in the Russian Federation, Putin's supervision of the regime structure that he created remained uninterrupted; this so-called tandem relationship between Putin and Medvedev shall be further detailed in Chapter III. Under the Russian constitution, the President, as head of state, is responsible for the conduct of foreign affairs and international relations, a principle that Putin vehemently defended when challenged by outside entities claiming he was still orchestrating all foreign and defense policy as Prime Minister.<sup>139</sup> Prime Minister Putin, constitutionally resigned to matters of the domestic government, nevertheless, did not refrain from public or private participation in such issues, even if claiming all decisions were made by Medvedev. Putin's anti-American trend during his second term would transcend his short time as Prime Minister, and continue practically unabated during Medvedev's administration and into Putin's third presidential term in 2012. A new American President Barack Obama, with President Medvedev, would attempt a famous "reset" in bilateral relations that had been spoiled over the previous four years, but as we shall witness, that "reset" proved tenuous.

### **1. Georgia**

Less than six months into what many in the world hoped would be a new Russia under Dmitri Medvedev, military conflict broke out between Russia and the pro-Western former Soviet Republic of Georgia over Georgia's separatist region of South Ossetia. The intricacies of the so called Five Day War in August 2008 and questions of "who

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<sup>139</sup> Vladimir Putin, interview by Matthew Chance, *CNN*, August 29, 2008, <http://www.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/europe/08/29/putin.transcript>



provoked who” are beyond the scope of this thesis. Needless to say, the fighting was brutal and a full-scale Russian invasion of Georgia ensued. Putin attributed sole authority for the decision to deploy Russian forces on President Medvedev and adamantly blamed Georgia and Georgian President Saakashvili for the “criminal actions” that precipitated the conflict.<sup>140</sup> Saakashvili, hoping for U.S. and European assistance in the conflict, never got it. The absence of overt American military intervention with Georgia, however, did not stop Putin from leveling blame upon the United States and President Bush for failing to “stop the aggressive actions of the Georgian leadership;” he also alleged covert U.S. presence orchestrated the Georgian military’s actions, issues that Putin also asserted could irreparably damage his personal relationship with Bush.<sup>141</sup> Putin even went so far as to charge the American government of secretly prodding the Georgians to create a destabilizing situation in the international scene that could inherently benefit one of the U.S. Presidential candidates during the final months of the 2008 campaign, namely Senator John McCain.<sup>142</sup>

In the aftermath of the conflict, as a ceasefire took effect with Russian “peacekeeping” forces remaining in South Ossetia (and Abkhazia), the Medvedev government formally recognized the independence of the two breakaway regions. The United States and West condemned such action and refused to reciprocate, claiming both must be re-incorporated into Georgia. America and the Western powers recognized Kosovar independence from Yugoslavia quickly after that war. It remains hypocritical, according to Putin, for them to not do the same for South Ossetia and Abkhazia, who desire the same independence after allegedly suffering under Georgian leadership as the Kosovar Albanians had under the Serbs.<sup>143</sup> The Georgian conflict, thereby, provided an excellent environment for Putin to continue his anti-American attacks upon the United States early in his tenancy as Prime Minister, another example of perceived American

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid

aggression toward Russia that could be easily seen by Putin's domestic populace, as they remained fixated upon events transpiring right on their own border.

## **2. The Obama-Medvedev Reset: Short Lived or DOA?**

The inauguration of President Barack Obama to succeed George W. Bush, in conjunction with a new Russian President Medvedev, brought renewed hope for a warming in U.S.-Russian bilateral relations: a much sought-after "reset." Medvedev himself proclaimed "positive relations with the new Administration: personally...with President Obama and other officials' and ministers' with their American counterparts." He further intimated that such relationships did not exist during the "previous Administration during its last years."<sup>144</sup> The crowning achievements between the United States and Russia due to the "reset," according to the Congressional Research Service were the 2010 New START treaty, 2010 cooperation on new sanctions against Iran, Russia's membership in the WTO in 2012, and ongoing Russian assistance with the Afghan War.<sup>145</sup> Putin, too, in 2010, commended Obama and hailed the recent subsiding of anti-Russian rhetoric from the United States government.<sup>146</sup>

Putin, however, did not stop his anti-American rhetoric toward the United States, even if they were slightly and temporarily more muted. He still blamed narrow minded influence seekers in the U.S. for the yet-repealed Jackson-Vanik trade amendment as well as Russia's longer-than average WTO admittance process.<sup>147</sup> He hostilely rebuked ongoing American criticisms of Russian democracy, again alleging the un-democratic nature of the U.S. electoral college. He asserted that U.S. and foreign involvement in Russia's internal affairs, as such foreign criticism of the regime is considered, is as unwelcome as foreign involvement in American internal affairs would be to

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<sup>144</sup> Dmitry Medvedev, interview by Fareed Zakaria, *CNN*, September 15, 2009, <http://eng/kremlin.ru/transcripts/1622>.

<sup>145</sup> Nichol, "Russian Political, Economic, and Security Issues and U.S. Interests," i.

<sup>146</sup> Vladimir Putin, interview by Larry King, *CNN*, December 2, 2010, <http://en/rian.ru/interview/20101202/161586625.html>.

<sup>147</sup> Vladimir Putin, "Putin's Q&A Session 2009," *Ria Novosti*, April 12, 2009, <http://en/rian.ru/analysis/20091204/157095963.html>.

Americans.<sup>148</sup> In response to the 2010 arrests of Russian sleeper-agents and extradition to Russia and Russian reciprocal expulsion of alleged U.S. spies, Putin was quite blasé on the matter; he emphasized that the agents' roles were not subversive while less-than-subtly pointing fingers at U.S. intelligences' role in human right's abuses within the Global War on Terror, including the condoning of torture, kidnapping, and secret prisons.<sup>149</sup> Putin decided to show ignorance over the (then) current events to publically focus on some obfuscated coincidence more congruent to the proliferation of his and his country's anti-American sentiments.

Therefore, though relations between the United States and "Medvedev's" Russia may have appeared better than the later years of Putin's second term, Putin still remained in the background (or foreground?). His inevitable return to the presidency in 2012 brought with it a resumption of overt anti-American hostility as if he had never left power to begin with, which, as we shall see, he did not.

### **3. The 2012 Election and Putin's Third Term**

Duma elections were held in Russia in later 2011, followed by the Presidential elections in the spring of 2012, in which Vladimir Putin was (re)elected to a third full term as head of state. Putin's political party United Russia also won substantial majorities in the Duma. In the aftermath of the Duma elections, whose fraudulent nature shall be discussed in Chapter III, waves of public protests erupted in Moscow and other urban centers. The protest movement, the largest yet witnessed in Putin's Russia, had been fanned by social media and allegations that the election was a rigged farce. The public movement, however, failed to put forward any galvanizing personality capable of uniting the angry mobs and capitalizing on their disenchantment.<sup>150</sup> Putin, as Prime Minister and Presidential "candidate," quickly denounced the protests, firmly believing that they had been organized and funded by the United States and the West to remove his regime from

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<sup>148</sup> Putin, interview by Larry King, *CNN*, December 2, 2010.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Mendras, *Russian Politics: The Paradox of a Weak State*, 3.

power just like had been, allegedly, done in Ukraine during the Orange Revolution.<sup>151</sup> He was once again playing on Russians' natural fears of outside coercion, trying to propagate his anti-American belief that the United States means him (and thereby Russia) harm, compelling the populace to rally around him in defense from the outsiders (i.e., the protesters). Putin's 2012 campaign became laden with anti-American rhetoric. He accused his rivals for the presidency of being "U.S. lackeys;" opposition protesters were "puppets" of the CIA and the American government while a marked increase in anti-American news stories flooded the state-run (and thereby Putin-controlled) media's airwaves.<sup>152</sup>

After Putin's inevitable victory, there remained hope for a return to more tempered relations between America and Russia once the campaign rhetoric died down. But Putin's attacks would not cease. Firmly believing the U.S. and her allies orchestrated the 2011–2012 anti-government protests in Russia in an attempt to bring down Putin's regime, Putin implemented strict guidelines for the operation and funding of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) within the Russian Federation. He claimed that foreign funded NGOs are used to "support extremism" and that they thereby "inevitably serve the interests of others."<sup>153</sup> The others that Putin refers to are the United States and its allies, which is why the American USAID organization was harshly targeted.<sup>154</sup> By citing U.S. and OSCE originated funding for independent election monitoring groups during the 2012 election, such groups purportedly funneled money to Internet sites designed to discredit the Russian government and organize the mass protests. Such foreign money used in political campaigns, he asserts, represents an affront to democracy

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<sup>151</sup> Trudy Rubin, "Putin Strongly anti-American," *The Spokesman-Review*, March 14, 2012, <http://www.spokesman.com/stories/2012/mar/14/trudy-rubin-putin-strongly-anti-american>.

<sup>152</sup> Vladimir Isachenkov, "Anti-Americanism key to Putin's campaign," *Associated Press*, February 17, 2012; Cullison, "Kremlin Resorts to Anti-Americanism."

<sup>153</sup> Nikolai Petrov, "Putin Continues to Feed the Siloviki," *The Moscow Times*, February 19, 2013, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com>.

<sup>154</sup> Nichol, "Russian Political, Economic, and Security Issues and U.S. Interests," i.

and simply a veiled attempt by one state “exerting influence on another” thereby threatening a state’s sovereignty.<sup>155</sup>

Putin’s defensiveness about international criticism of his handling of domestic affairs came to a boil after his election victory. Overly-defensive people have a tendency to over-react, as was the case in his response to the December 2012 Magnitsky Law in the United States, which passed in conjunction with Putin’s long awaited repeal of the Jackson-Vanik trade amendment. The Magnitsky provisions prohibited U.S. visas and banking access to certain Russian officials deemed responsible for the death of Sergei Magnitsky who was jailed after investigating tax corruption. A foreign state attempting to punish Russians accused of human rights violations could not go unanswered by Putin. The measure only further inflamed his hostile anti-Americanism. There was wide support for a copy-cat law directed against U.S. officials, but they instead banned U.S. adoptions of Russian children after Putin’s state media successfully over exaggerated the circumstances surrounding a single death of a Russian baby in the United States. Putin claimed that U.S. criticism over the death of Magnistky was only used as a pretext to initiate a new anti-Russian law to replace the expiring Cold-War era anti-Soviet Jackson-Vanik law. He further obfuscated the issue by citing deaths in U.S. jails and American hypocrisy due to “unlawful” seizures and imprisonment of peoples around the world.<sup>156</sup> Putin had resorted to anti-American attacks over seemingly miniscule events, all to perpetuate the narrative within the Kremlin and Russia of a United States using any means available to diminish Russia.

The Magnitsky episode represents just one example of a Kremlin that feels incensed to counter every seemingly anti-Russian policy by the United States or even criticism by random minor-U.S. politicians, who still routinely refer to Russia as the Soviet Union. This sheds further light on the culture of anti-Americanism in Putin’s

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<sup>155</sup> Cullison, “Kremlin Resorts to Anti-Americanism;” Putin, “Speech and the Following Discussion at the Munich Conference on Security Policy.”

<sup>156</sup> Vladimir Putin, “News Conference of Vladimir Putin,” December 20, 2012, <http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/text/speeches.shtml>.

government.<sup>157</sup> As recently as April 2013, after the United States barred travel of 18 accused Russian human-rights violators, Putin responded in kind, barring 18 American officials from entering Russia. Putin's government asserted that the 18 Americans were culpable in grievous global human rights violations like torture and unlimited detention of terror suspects. In reality, the Russian list was composed mostly of individuals involved in court cases against corrupt Russian officials.<sup>158</sup> Vladimir Putin's exploitation of alleged Western hostility toward Russian domestic affairs will continue to fuel his and, transitively, his public's anti-Americanism until the United States and her allies effectively recant their criticisms of his regime. Putin's own deputy chief of staff, Dmitry Peskov, has intimated as much: "the dialogue between the Russian government and the opposition cannot be a subject of the bilateral relationship between Moscow and Washington,...we are a country that will solve all the problems, domestic and the like, without any interference from abroad."<sup>159</sup>

When asked about the need to "reset" relations once again between the United States and Russia, Putin resorts to a seemingly school-yard mentality: "if we are slapped, we must retaliate, otherwise we will always be taken advantage of."<sup>160</sup> A tit-for-tat relationship between two world powers is unlikely to result in any return to a rapport of mutual trust.

#### **4. Ongoing Events**

The most recent several months while writing this thesis has borne witness to a seemingly never-ending series of events pertinent to the topics of our discussion: Syria, the Boston Marathon Bombings, Edward Snowden, and ongoing tension between the

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<sup>157</sup> Fyodor Lukyanov, "Why is Russia anti-American?" *RT*, February 24, 2012, <http://lolo.rt.com/politics/columns/unpredictable-world-foreign-lukyanov/russia-usa-america-putin/>

<sup>158</sup> Peter Baker and Ellen Barry, "U.S. Penalizes Russians for Human Rights Violations.," *The New York Times*, April 12, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/14/world/europe/>; Ellen Barry, "Russia Bars 18 Americans After Sanctions by U.S.," *New York Times*, April 15, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/14/world/europe/>.

<sup>159</sup> Dmitry Peskov, interview by Paul Saunders, "Resetting the U.S.-Russian Reset," *The National Interest*, January 23, 2013, <http://nationalinterest.org/print/commentary/exclusive-it-takes-two-tango-8009>.

<sup>160</sup> Putin, "News Conference of Vladimir Putin," December 20, 2012.

Obama and Putin governments to name a few. As most such recent events remain ongoing, any thorough academic analysis of them here shall remain mostly conjecture. Suffice it to say, events during this most recent year have provided additional fodder to fuel Putin's seemingly never-ending anti-American propaganda machine toward his populace.

Vladimir Putin's position regarding Syria has changed little in the course of the multi-year civil war. On the prospect of a regime change, Putin condemns America's and the West's horrible track record of post-conflict reconstruction in Afghanistan, Iraq, and now Libya. He accuses the United States of aiding terrorists (i.e., the Syrian opposition) just like America did in the 1980s in Afghanistan, rebels who eventually became Al Qaeda.<sup>161</sup> He routinely blasted the United States and West for reneging on Russian-orchestrated peace frameworks while justifying Russian arms sales to the Assad government because the Assad government is the current legitimate government of Syria and international norms prohibit arms supplies to recognized rebel groups seeking regime change through military conflict in any state.<sup>162</sup> As an American military attack against Assad for chemical weapon's use seemed eminent, Putin echoed his previous consternations in an op-ed for the *New York Times*, touting the illegitimate nature of U.S. unilateralism over the previous decades in the face of the U.N. and international law and challenging any notion of American exceptionalism.<sup>163</sup> His piece, suffice it to say, was not well received in the United States.

In the aftermath of the Boston Marathon Bombings by two men with ties to the Russian Caucasus, Putin again emphasized his decade-long talking points referring to Russia as one of the "earliest victims" of international terrorism. He intimated that U.S. authorities failed to adhere to Russian warnings about the individuals and future complete cooperation between the two states on anti-terror intelligence would stop all such attacks.

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<sup>161</sup> Vladimir Putin, interview by Kevin Owen, *Russia Today TV Channel*, September 6, 2012, <http://eng.kremlin.ru/transcripts/4367>.

<sup>162</sup> Vladimir Putin, interview by Jorg Schonenborn, *German ARD*, April 5, 2013, <http://eng.kremlin.ru/transcripts/5216>.

<sup>163</sup> Vladimir Putin, "A Plea for Caution From Russia: What Putin Has to Say to Americans About Syria," *The New York Times*, September 11, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/12/opinion>.

He then resorted to scolding American and Western media who routinely refer to Caucuses-originated attacks on Russia as the actions of “insurgents” rather than terrorists, even claiming American and Western financing of such terrorists in the South Caucuses.<sup>164</sup>

The soap-opera-like saga of famed NSA leaker Edward Snowden is likely to have ramifications well beyond his recent receiving of temporary asylum in Russia. President Obama subsequently cancelled a bilateral meeting between himself and Putin, though there was largely little to discuss between the two men even before the Snowden affair.<sup>165</sup> Regardless, Putin granting Snowden asylum was the perfect snub of America: it would be embarrassing to the United States; public opinion in Russia was on his side; U.S. adversaries loved Snowden for exposing alleged American imperialism; Putin could exploit the incident within the context of U.S.-Russian bickering regarding human rights.<sup>166</sup>

With Snowden fresh on the mind and Syria as an elephant in the room, there should have been little surprise that the G20 Summit in St. Petersburg in September 2013 included very little in the way of meetings between U.S. and Russian officials beyond the obligatory photo-ops. There has been renewed international cooperation on the issue of Syrian chemical weapons, but such collaboration between the United States and Russia is unlikely to bring a sudden thawing in the otherwise frosty relationship. Putinist anti-Americanism is liable to continue for the duration of Putin’s third term (and fourth and fifth and sixth...?) because as we have seen (1) it never truly left, and as we will see (2) it has become a necessity in Putin’s political calculus.

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<sup>164</sup> Vladimir Putin, “Direct Line with Vladimir Putin,” April 25, 2013, <http://eng.kremlin.ru/transcripts/5328>.

<sup>165</sup> Josh Gerstein, “Obama’s Russia Reset Unravels,” *Politico*, August 7, 2013, <http://www.politico.com/story/2013/08/obama-russia-edward-snowden-95302.html>

<sup>166</sup> Jim Maceda, “Analysis: What does Putin get from giving temporary asylum to Edward Snowden?” *NBC News*, August 7, 2013, [http://worldnews.nbcnews.com/\\_news/2013/08/07/19912839](http://worldnews.nbcnews.com/_news/2013/08/07/19912839).



## G. CONCLUSIONS

In writing their book *Anti-Americanism in Russia from Stalin to Putin*, published in 2000, Eric Shiraev and Vladislav Zubok offered what, in hindsight, proved to be a very astute set of prognostications. As Putin had just come to power, Shiraev and Zubok believed one of three outcomes would transpire in the subsequent years: (1) Putin would remove all opposition to his rule and become a complete authoritarian within the constitutional framework and not employ rampant anti-Americanism, or (2) he would become a modern strong-man, forever harboring underlying anti-American sentiments, a KGB mentality, and fear of perceived American pressure upon him, resulting in perpetual tensions between the U.S. and Russia and spurning a routine usage of anti-Americanism within his domestic sphere, or (3) Putin's leadership would fail and his personal opinion of the United States would be irrelevant while under constant attack from the political opposition destined to marginalize the position of the Russian Presidency.<sup>167</sup>

Their second prediction seems to have come to near complete fruition. As will be discussed in Chapter III, the notion that Putin's regime has become completely authoritarian as portrayed in the first theory remains misguided. Putin has obviously not failed to secure his power-position as alluded to in theory three.

Based on the preceding sections, Putin's anti-Americanism is rooted in his life experiences before his sudden rise to national prominence. He grew up within an anti-Western Soviet Union; he attended a university and law school taught by fervent anti-Western communists; he worked for years within the KGB, an organization designed, among other functions, to combat anti-Soviet and pro-American/Western ideology. Before the Berlin Wall came down and the Red Flag was removed from atop the Kremlin, Vladimir Putin had likely developed a severe cognitive pre-disposition, an anti-Americanism to be precise. Based on Robert Jervis's four variables to determine the strength of one's cognitive pre-disposition, the Cold War and Putin's service within the Soviet machine would have had a long-lasting and permanent effect on his psyche and perception toward the United States.

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<sup>167</sup> Shiraev and Zubok, *Anti-Americanism in Russia from Stalin to Putin*, 139–141.

Jervis further writes that “because of their predispositions, they see the present as like recent and dramatic events without carefully considering alternative models or the implications of this way of perceiving.”<sup>168</sup> Putin, thereby, equates current and recent American actions as analogous to past American actions. The United States sought to undermine the Soviet Union during the Cold War and proceeded to a perceived routine snubbing of Yeltsin’s Russia during the 1990s where the United States allegedly sought to exploit Russian weaknesses. Muffled in the early 2000s and in the aftermath of 9/11, Vladimir Putin’s anti-Americanism could best be described as fluctuating in its outward portrayal but consistently a factor within his internal psychological/cognitive calculations. It was always there and always will be there, even if the level of vociferousness alters between a whisper and a shout. Muted in an attempt to cozy to George W. Bush, Putin turned up his anti-American volume again when overtures for Russian integration with the Western world were perceived to have been met with perpetual acrimony from the United States and West. Ole Holsti, in his book *To See Ourselves as Others See Us: How Publics Abroad View the United States after 9/11*, reiterates that American actions and policy after the September 2001 attacks became the primary driving force behind growing anti-Americanism worldwide.<sup>169</sup> Putin has witnessed American actions of late as further evidence proving his cognitive predispositions toward an inherently hostile America, thereby further justifying his anti-Americanism. Holsti would concur with such an assessment, holding that people and governments around the world tend to interpret American actions in any way to sustain their entrenched pre-conceptions.<sup>170</sup>

Andrei Tsygankov contends that Putin’s post-Iraq War foreign policy and stance toward the United States are more assertive and contentious because Russian contemporary and domestic interests are perceived to be best served as such.<sup>171</sup> Other

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<sup>168</sup> Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, 282.

<sup>169</sup> Ole Holsti, *To See Ourselves as Others See Us: How Publics Abroad View the United States after 9/11* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 215.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 216.

<sup>171</sup> Tsygankov, “Russia’s Foreign Policy,” 224.

contemporary observers would agree based on just what U.S. and Russian interests truly *were, are, and will be*. At the time of the Iraq War, Russia simply no longer held a strategically important place in U.S. foreign policy; the two states simply do not overwhelmingly need each other for anything in the geopolitical realm anymore; they are economically mutually-dispensable and they should not fear a nuclear holocaust between themselves as in Soviet times.<sup>172</sup> Putin's anti-Americanism, by these accounts, may therefore not be as perpetually endogenous as this thesis contends.

If one considers the cognitive pre-disposition theory of Robert Jervis, nevertheless, Vladimir Putin has been, is, and will be inherently anti-American. The anti-Americanism of his past Soviet experience became ossified during his time between the communist collapse and his rise to power. While in power, his anti-American propensities returned to a discernible nature in conjunction within a few years in spite of, but not necessarily exclusively owing to the Iraq War. Putin's inherent anti-Americanism manifested itself through an extended pattern of animosity in rhetoric and actions over the course of his presidencies, particularly acutely since 2003. According to Ivan Krastev: "anti-Americanism is a systemic opposition to America as a whole. It is a critique of the United States that transcends mere disagreement over specific policy questions or government decisions."<sup>173</sup> Putin's anti-Americanism, as exemplified in this chapter, is not reduced to any isolated incident, but has become a pattern of general opposition to all things American. Peter Katzenstein and Robert Keohane would conclude that Putin has shown a consistent anti-American "attitude" that factors into any perceptions he has of the United States.<sup>174</sup>

Increasingly fervent and vociferous, Putin's anti-American guidance of Russia has aided in the frosting of what was, though short-lived, a seemingly warm bilateral

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<sup>172</sup> Fiona Hill and Clifford Gaddy, "Dealing with the real Putin," *The International Herald Tribune*, February 5, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.libproxy.nps.edu/docview> ; Ivan Krastev, "Would democratic change in Russia transform its foreign policy?" *Open Democracy*, February 7, 2013, <http://opendemocracy.net/od-russia/ivan-krastev>.

<sup>173</sup> Ivan Krastev, "The Anti-American Century," *Journal of Democracy* 15, no 2 (April 2004): 7.

<sup>174</sup> Peter Katzenstein and Robert Keohane, *Anti-Americanism in World Politics* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2007), 12.

relationship between the two states. Subsequent Chapters shall provide evidence about the domestic political ramifications, and benefits, that Putin's anti-Americanism has brought him within the government system that he created. As a closer look is taken into the mechanics of the Putinist regime and its role in Russian society, one must keep in the back of their mind the notion that Vladimir Putin, the man, has always been anti-American.

### **III. VLADIMIR PUTIN'S RUSSIA: BETWEEN DEMOCRACY AND DICTATORSHIP?**

Chapter III will offer an overview of Putin's hybrid authoritarian regime and what makes his Russia something less than an outright authoritative state, though far from a true democracy. As such, a discussion will be offered on the elements of Putin's Russia that remain or resemble a democracy and those elements that most certainly do not. I shall further detail the specific authoritarian mechanisms employed by the Putin regime to retain power and influence the nation as a whole regarding domestic issues and international relations. Such detail will provide a basis of understanding for Chapter IV which shall further examine such mechanisms' use in manipulating Russians' attitudes toward the United States. This chapter's investigation will include a discussion of basic resource theory and how it is applied in Russia. This chapter shall also highlight how the Putinist regime's resource control, like its control over the media, can help him manipulate public anti-American sentiments to suit his domestic political needs.

Given Putin's incomplete though extremely strong grip on power, an analysis of the role of the public and the elites within the Russian political sphere will also be offered. Is Putin beholden to either, neither, or both bases for support of his perpetual power-hold? If his reign remains at the mercy of these groups, whether under remaining democratic auspices or threat of popular uprising, then Putin is obliged to employ whatever means available to maintain their "support," to include authoritarian repression and falsely-democratic legitimization. Maintaining an anti-American mood in Russian society, like those sentiments he has harbored for so long, has become a prime means of maintaining that necessary level of "support." In order to examine *how* anti-Americanism is necessary for those ends, this chapter will first explore *why* the autocrat Putin still needs popular and elitist support. To do that, an analysis of some of the mechanical idiosyncrasies of his regime's general workings must also be explored. This chapter will provide a base of understanding of the authoritarian nature of Russian domestic governance for a subsequent interpretation of the integration of Putin's anti-Americanism with domestic politics.

## A. WHAT MAKES AN AUTHORITARIAN STATE?

As the imperial system of global order disintegrated in the 20th century, a boom occurred on the atlases of the world; more and more new states came into being. Within these new states developed forms of government different than the common types seen among the world powers at the time: not democratic, not totalitarian, not monarchist. Something in-between a democratic state and a totalitarian state had materialized: a system of government that came to be called *authoritarian*, first detailed in 1964 by Juan Linz in referring to Spain.<sup>175</sup> In the aftermath of the Soviet collapse, a wave of democratic governments emerged especially in the post-Soviet space. Those democratic states were not meant to survive as such, unfortunately. According to Larry Diamond, a subsequent wave occurred: a “democratic rollback.” The populations of these new democratic states, according to Diamond, lost faith in democracy’s ability to improve their lives and their government, precipitating a renewed acquiescence to authoritarian alternatives.<sup>176</sup> The result in many cases, as seen in Russia, was a new form of government, now lying between Linz’s original authoritarian model and a democratic system, incorporating clear aspects of both.

This section will offer a brief outline of what makes an authoritarian state compared to a hybrid state before a detailed investigation of the authoritative-democratic mechanisms employed by Putin in creating and maintaining his form of governance.

### 1. True Authoritarian States

Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan lay out four distinct characteristics of an authoritarian regime that differentiate it from a complete totalitarian regime. According to these authors, a totalitarian regime like in the USSR offered no economic, social, or political pluralism. It maintained a strong guiding ideology, often referencing a utopic

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<sup>175</sup> Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, “Modern Nondemocratic Regimes,” in *Essential Readings in Comparative Politics*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., eds. Patrick O’Neil and Ronald Rogowski (New York: W. W. Norton & Company: 2010), 207.

<sup>176</sup> Larry Diamond, “The Democratic Rollback: The Resurgence of the Predatory state,” in *Essential Readings in Comparative Politics*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., eds. Patrick O’Neil and Ronald Rogowski (New York: W. W. Norton & Company: 2010), 235.

vision and forced mobilization of society into regime-created organizations while denouncing private life. Totalitarian regimes, too, consist of an often charismatic leadership absent limits to their power with ascension within the regime dependent on success within the ruling party organization.<sup>177</sup>

In contrast, Linz and Stepan equate authoritarian regimes as offering “some limited political pluralism and often quite extensive economic and social pluralism.”<sup>178</sup> The political system of authoritarian regimes also operates largely absent both a wide-ranging and elaborate ideology and extensive mass-mobilization. The leadership of an authoritarian regime “exercises power within formally ill-defined but actually quite predictable norms” with leadership usually drawn from within established “elite groups,” and offering “some autonomy in state careers and in military.”<sup>179</sup>

There are many fully authoritarian states in the world today, but calling Putin’s Russia one of them would be a mistake, though at face value his regime seems to fit rather well into the four stereotypical descriptions outlined above. Russia does have some level of political pluralism; elections are held. Russians enjoy a significant degree of economic freedom compared to Soviet communist models. A communist ideology no longer encompasses all aspects of Russians’ lives, nor are they forced to mobilize to demonstrate participation and support of the regime. We must, instead, consider Putin’s Russia as something other-than a full authoritarian state.

## **2. Hybrid Authoritarian States**

What makes Russia under Putin something short of an authoritarian regime? Namely the nature of Russia’s political pluralism and that pluralism’s implied pressure on the regime leadership. Specifically, Putin’s regime is subjected to routine popular elections in which opposition to the regime on the ballots could theoretically force the regime’s removal from power in accordance with a constitution that is still recognized as legitimate by the regime and the nation as a whole. Timothy Colton and Henry Hale

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<sup>177</sup> Linz and Stepan, “Modern Nondemocratic Regimes,” 210.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., 209.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., 211.

similarly support this theory: “regular elections are still conducted for the country’s most powerful positions and that these elections still include at least some real alternative candidate or party, key factors that distinguish a *hybrid* regime from a full-fledged authoritarian one.”<sup>180</sup> Wide political pluralism and a leadership constrained within a democratic constitution mean that Putin cannot operate as a complete authoritarian. That means he must still maintain a level of appeal to the electorate and voice opinions relevant to his constituents’ beliefs, like playing upon or instilling reservations about external enemies, like America. As it shall be demonstrated in subsequent sections, nevertheless, the political pluralism in Russia is only truly open and democratic on paper.

If Russia under Putin falls short of a full-fledged authoritarian state, but remains significantly dissociated from a democracy, what can it be called? Grigorii Golosov considers Putinist Russia as exhibiting “electoral authoritarianism.” He states that the practice of elections, though largely unfair and far from Western liberal norms, “remain the principle source of regime legitimacy.”<sup>181</sup> Nikolai Petrov et al employ the term “overmanaged democracy.”<sup>182</sup> They justify their terminology by citing the fact that Putin’s Russia evolved from a much more liberal democratic form under Yeltsin; the Putin regime does not want to dismantle democracy, but rather keep it and simply ensure their perpetual victories in elections, thereby maintaining the personal benefits that the leaders have accrued under democracy.<sup>183</sup> Nonetheless, the consensus remains clear. Marie Mendras effectively sums up many writers’ interpretations in referencing “2-sided behavior” based on authoritarian political methods while claiming to be a democracy. Dmitri Trenin similarly calls Russia an authoritarian state with democratic institutions,

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<sup>180</sup> Timothy Colton and Henry Hale, “The Putin Vote: Presidential Electorates in a Hybrid Regime,” *Slavic Review* 68, no. 3 (Fall 2009): 503.

<sup>181</sup> Grigorii Golosov, “The Regional Roots of Electoral Authoritarianism in Russia,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 63, no. 4 (June 2011): 623.

<sup>182</sup> Nikolai Petrov, Masha Lipman, and Henry Hale, “Overmanaged Democracy in Russia: Governance Implications of Hybrid Regimes,” *Carnegie Papers*, no 106 (February 2010): 1.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.



which includes the institution of universal suffrage.<sup>184</sup> For simplicities sake, I, like Colton and Hale, among others, shall henceforth use the term *hybrid* when referencing the Putinist government system in Russia.

## **B. PUTIN'S AUTHORITARIAN CONTROLLED DEMOCRACY: THE MECHANISMS**

Putin's Russia has been established for what it is: an authoritarian-democratic *hybrid* regime. This chapter shall now delve deeper into just how Putin succeeded in molding what was a flawed but relatively open and liberal democratic structure under Boris Yeltsin into what people see today: a controlled democracy under a single man and his loyalists. Yeltsin's resignation at the end of 1999 elevated Vladimir Putin to the presidency of a nation in turmoil, both economic and political. The conditions were ripe for a new leader to exploit the nation's disappointment with the current situation to justify a new course. That course would entail a stronger central authority as the apex of control within the state, a near authoritarian model partially reminiscent of Soviet times, though obviously lacking the aforementioned totalitarian characteristics. The Yeltsinian attempt at an American or Western socio-economic-democratic state would need to be completely discredited so that the anti-American-way of governing (i.e., the Putin way) could become the most logical alternative.

Baker and Glasser reference a Putin "counterrevolution," in which Russian democracy was not overtly dismantled, but no longer aggressively pursued. Rather, Putin allowed democracy to stagnate, spurning the nation's retreat to a default form of authoritarianism, something much more historically natural to Russia.<sup>185</sup> Putin would then employ the resources available to him as head of state to recentralize Russian authority back to the Kremlin, usurping or undermining the other centers of power that had emerged under Yeltsin: the media, regional governors, legislatures, and the business elites/oligarchs.<sup>186</sup> But even under the new (similar to the old) centralized system,

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<sup>184</sup> Dmitri Trenin, *Post-Imperium: A Eurasian Story* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2011), 72.

<sup>185</sup> Baker and Glasser, *Kremlin Rising*, 7.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

Putin's hybrid regime has to maintain the perceptions of non-authoritarianism in the eyes of its "constituents," the world, and itself. As subsequent sections shall elucidate, the hybrid regime's constituents, the Russian elites and the Russian people, thereby, retain some levels of leverage over even the authoritarian side of Putin's two-faced regime.

### **1. Attack the Yeltsin Years**

Chapter II already detailed Putin's abandonment of Yeltsin's early dream of integration *into* the Western world, followed by his attempted, though largely rebuffed, full integration *with* the Western world and United States. Dmitri Trenin surmised that Putin then reverted to the restoration of Russia as a non-aligned great global power, and to achieve or retain such great power status, the Russian state would require complete independence and unassailable sovereignty.<sup>187</sup> The ruling regime had to be safe from any pressure or external support, be they foreign or domestic. Putin would eventually attribute renewed Russian economic and political stability to Russia's and his own distancing themselves from American and Western influence and democratic formulae.<sup>188</sup>

In order for Vladimir Putin to publically justify his new path for the Russian governmental system, one that could obfuscate the law and curb Yeltsin-era freedoms, he first attacked and discredited the current/former system: the Yeltsinian turmoil-ridden endeavor for an Americanized/Western democracy and free-market capitalism. According to Marie Mendras, the Putinist regime built their "order and stability" state around perpetual condemnation of the 1990s and any accusations about the authoritarian nature of their policies brought a quick rebuke to the effect of: "anything is better than the chaos of the past."<sup>189</sup>

In the United States, Presidents typically adhere to an unwritten rule and refrain from open and aggressive attacks of their predecessors by name; policy attacks, however, are the *modus operandi*. Putin openly commended Boris Yeltsin during his first years as president following Yeltin's resignation. By 2002, however, Putin's anti-Yeltsin attacks

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<sup>187</sup> Trenin, *Post-Imperium: A Eurasian Story*, 210.

<sup>188</sup> Mendras, *Russian Politics: The Paradox of a Weak State*, 10.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

had become commonplace, referring to the “period of weakness” and the need for increased “political stability” in addresses before the Russian Duma.<sup>190</sup> Improved political stability, he asserted, would necessitate a change to executive authority to make the office of the president more “logically and rationally organized.”<sup>191</sup> In other words, the President of Russia needed more centralized and authoritarian power, power that Yeltsin had given away in the tumultuous early 1990s in advance of an Americanized democratic federalism and free capitalism.

As the years progressed, Putin continually compared Russia’s current situation to the situation before he entered office. He hostilely rebuked accusations of humanitarian atrocities in Chechnya, claiming how much more stable the Caucasus were compared to the previous decade.<sup>192</sup> In 2003, according to Putin, conditions in Russia were astonishingly better than the “troubles of three years ago.”<sup>193</sup> While running for a second term in 2004, he portrayed himself as an “anti-Yeltsin” and again blamed the liberal government of the 1990s for Russia’s problems more than the previous communist-totalitarian system.<sup>194</sup> Anti-Yeltsinism was not only a rebuke on the former flawed revolutionary leader, but also an attack on the ideals that Yeltsin had once trumpeted: an American or Western style of society. When re-elected in 2004, Putin still could not fray from attacking his predecessor, laying acclaim upon his regime for overcoming the problems that seemed “insurmountable back in 2000.”<sup>195</sup> In Putin’s post re-election 2004 address to the Duma, he attacks the Yeltsin years for diminishing Russia on the world stage. Renewed political and economic stability under Putin’s own leadership had finally sewn the necessary conditions for Russia to effectively “tackle” the problems leftover from that era.<sup>196</sup> Putin condemns rampant corruption and immorality in 2006 as holdover

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<sup>190</sup> Putin, “Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation,” April 18, 2002.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

<sup>192</sup> Putin, “Transcript of a Meeting with French Regional Press and TV Channels,” February 12, 2003.

<sup>193</sup> Putin, “Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation,” May 16, 2003.

<sup>194</sup> Baker and Glasser, *Kremlin Rising*, 316.

<sup>195</sup> Putin, “Putin’s Inauguration Speech,” *RIA Novosti*, May 7, 2004.

<sup>196</sup> Putin, “Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation,” May 26, 2004.

attributes of the 1990s.<sup>197</sup> Putin's comparisons of a stable and prosperous Russia under himself compared to the turmoil of the Yeltsin years would never stop, and have not to this day.

Vladimir Putin succeeded in demonizing the Yeltsin years (i.e., the American/Western experiment in Russia) so well, that the Russian populace, by and large, proved willing to overlook the radical changes he was instituting against the democratic system that he inherited and many of the civil liberties people had unknowingly enjoyed. In Russia, the Yeltsin years came to be remembered not as any sort of triumph of democracy over communism or a period of new personal freedoms and liberties, but rather just a time of great hardship and instability.<sup>198</sup> Putin, with the (then) current type of American government-economic system discredited, could proceed to change it for his personal and political benefit.

## **2. State Control and Resource Theory**

As mentioned previously, Putin would embark on a mission to restore the supreme authority of the Russian executive over the other centers of power that had evolved during the "chaotic period" under Yeltsin.<sup>199</sup> The recentralization of power back to the Kremlin necessitated a usurping or undermining of the economic leaders, namely the business elites and oligarchs, the media, the regional governors, and the federal legislatures.<sup>200</sup>

Vladimir Putin completed his PhD dissertation in 1996 on the topic of strategic planning in the natural resource sector. Though there is ongoing debate over the academic integrity of Putin's work, his vision for Russia's economic future seemed obvious. A Brookings Institution analysis of his writing concluded that "Putin favors a market

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<sup>197</sup> Putin, "Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation," May 10, 2006.

<sup>198</sup> David Remnick, "The Civil Archipelago: How far can the resistance to Vladimir Putin go?" *The New Yorker*, December 19, 2011, <http://www.newyorker.com>.

<sup>199</sup> Putin, "Putin's Q&A Session 2009," *Ria Novosti*, April 12, 2009.

<sup>200</sup> Baker and Glasser, *Kremlin Rising*, 6.

economy with strong state regulation and preemptive power in the economy.”<sup>201</sup> The state, thereby, would need to insert itself into facets of the economy to ensure the protection of state interests. The details of Putin’s power play against the formerly independent business oligarchs is too complicated a topic for this paper. The Kremlin’s insertion into the natural resource sector, once the purview entirely of the business elites in the 1990s, would effectively bring Russian big-industry, one of the four pre-Putin centers of power, under Kremlin supervision.

Much more pertinent to this thesis’s topic of anti-Americanism is Putin’s commandeering of one of the other centers of power, the free-mass media that existed prior to his presidency. Vladimir Putin’s enmity toward any media organization that perpetuates anti-government or anti-Putin rhetoric is common knowledge. Putin and his regime have successfully established the dominant position within the Russian media, through state-owned and operated outlets and the supposed independent outlets that are owned and operated by wealthy Putin loyalists. It is that domineering control of most of the mass-media, especially the television channels in Russia, that can be attributed to the unfettered ability of Putin’s Kremlin to force their messages upon the whole Russian audience. According to the Levada Center polling in 2011, 74% of the Russian populace watches the state-run television stations as their primary source of information and news.<sup>202</sup> It is basic resource theory according to Vladimir Shlapentokh; the government controls the media resources as the prime vessels of information dissemination, and thereby is able to control the information that gets disseminated.<sup>203</sup> That information message could be anti-American in nature, anti-opposition, but never anti-Putin or anti-regime.

In 2005, Putin extolled the virtues and necessity of state-run TV and media, saying that they should be “as objective as possible, free from the influence of any

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<sup>201</sup> Igor Danchenko and Clifford Gaddy, “The Mystery of Vladimir Putin’s Dissertation,” *Foreign Policy Program Panel* at the Brookings Institution, March 20, 2006, 6.

<sup>202</sup> *Russian Public Opinion 2010–2011* (Moscow: Levada Analytical Center, 2012), 213.

<sup>203</sup> Vladimir Shlapentokh, “The Puzzle of Russian Anti-Americanism: From ‘Below’ or From ‘Above,’” *Europe-Asia Studies* 63, no. 5 (2011), 875–876.

particular groups, and that they reflect the whole spectrum of public and political forces in the country.”<sup>204</sup> Based on the reality of Putin’s media control, his above statement could be read as follows: the media should be as objective as possible on issues of non-importance to the regime and overtly subjective otherwise; it should be free from the influence of any particular group not friendly to Putin’s regime; the media should reflect the whole spectrum of pro-Putin public and pro-Putin political forces in the country. A month after that speech, Putin, when confronted by a Western journalist over the non-independent nature of the three primary Russian TV stations, quickly refuted the allegations, referring to the joint-stock nature of two of the station’s ownership, even though the state and Putin loyalists held majority shares.<sup>205</sup> He further pointed to the proliferation of thousands of independent radio and print newspapers as a source of information for the people while ignoring the statistics showing TV as the prime information source for the people.<sup>206</sup>

Putin’s state-media control, as we shall see in Chapter IV, remains the primary mechanism by which the regime can manipulate and disseminate news, information, and propaganda to the masses. The Soviets, and in reality any authoritarian regime, acted similarly. By controlling the media, the Soviets, like Putin, could control the level of anti-American news or propaganda that reached the isolated Russian population and thereby directly control the population’s anti-American aggressiveness, which prior to 1947 was tepid at worst. Soviet leaders intensified or curtailed the anti-American propaganda in their media throughout the Cold War. Under Stalin it was rampant; under Brezhnev it was restricted while pursuing a mutual *détente*; by the time of Gorbachev’s *Perestroika*, it was practically non-existent.<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> Putin, “Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation,” April 25, 2005.

<sup>205</sup> Putin, interview by Mike Wallace, *CBS News*, May 9, 2005.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>207</sup> Shlapentokh, “The Puzzle of Russian Anti-Americanism,” 880.

### 3. Maintaining the Illusion

The Putin regime re-inserted extreme government influence in economic sectors and the media. It simultaneously employed those very state-resources, like near monopolistic mass-media control, to further guarantee the long-term survival of the Putinist regime in the face of democratic institutions. For the benefit of observers, both foreign and domestic, the perception of democracy had to be maintained, especially while the spirit of liberal democracy was being usurped. “Putin’s Kremlin uses media repression as an indispensable part of a strategy to prevent the emergence of credible opposition that could seriously challenge the current regime.”<sup>208</sup> Putin would employ the mechanisms inherent within the authoritarian aspects of his government to ensure that his government would not face any legitimate democratic opposition, be it from an individual in an election or a political party. Those mechanisms included open but highly controlled and manipulated elections as well as debilitating legal constraints against non-Putinist political organizations passed and implemented by Putinist-controlled legislatures. As discussed in Chapter II, any political or mass opposition that did arise during and beyond Putin’s second term was immediately vilified by Putin and his proxies as agents of foreign/American influence; anti-Americanism had become a critical facet in Putin’s democratic face as much as his authoritarian face. Anti-Americanism had emerged as but another tool employed within an authoritarian control mechanism to garner democratic political benefits.

#### a. “Democratic” Elections

Routine elections remain the key to maintaining the illusion or semblance of democratic governance in Putin’s hybrid Russia. Unfortunately, the elections under Putin have become more and more a mechanism to uphold the appearance of preserving the institution of universal suffrage than a way to truly challenge the regime’s hold on power. The populace during the Putin years has become disenchanted with the

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<sup>208</sup> Robert Orttung and Christopher Walker, “Putin and Russia’s Crippled Media,” *Russian Analytical Digest*, no. 123 (February 21, 2013): 2.

democratic process and public life because “it has been emptied of content.”<sup>209</sup> In accordance with the Russian constitution, any election that fails to garner 50% participation among eligible voters is deemed invalid; Putin’s regime, therefore, *needs* people to vote. If too many people refrain from voting, more pro-regime ballot stuffing becomes necessary, making the election increasingly likely to draw public criticism as completely illegitimate.

Putin’s first election in 2000 was the most non-fraudulent election of his era. A plurality of the population legitimately rallied to support him at the ballot box, fearing the opposition alternatives, which was still comprised of communists. A degree of electioneering, however, was necessary from the Yeltsin/Putin machine to ensure Putin received a majority vote, thereby averting a potentially costly run-off against a powerful communist opposition candidate Gennady Zyuganov.<sup>210</sup> Even before the presidential elections, the Putin/Yeltsin loyalists employed the means of the state media to discredit Yevgeny Primakov, the most powerful potential opponent to Putin and the new pro-Putin Unity political party. After Unity’s victory in the 1999 Duma elections, Primakov dropped out of the presidential race, eventually becoming a close confidant of Putin himself.<sup>211</sup>

By the time of the next round of elections in 2003 and 2004, Putinists had gained control over the most important media outlets. State controlled television launched never ending attacks on the communist party while promoting Putin’s United Russia Party (formerly Unity) in the Duma elections.<sup>212</sup> So worried were the Putin loyalists over a the necessity to have a Duma with some semblance of opposition that the Kremlin ordered state TV to run additional stories and air time to the pro-democratic political parties, like Yabloko, hoping to keep their ballot support above the 5% threshold guaranteeing them proportionally allocated seats in the new legislature; they failed.<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> Mendras, *Russian Politics: The Paradox of a Weak State*, 16.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>211</sup> Baker and Glasser, *Kremlin Rising*, 57.

<sup>212</sup> Baker and Glasser, *Kremlin Rising*, 293.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., 307.



The 2003 Duma elections brought a two-thirds United Russia majority to the Duma, which would grant Putin and his allies the constitutional legality to change the Russian constitution, to include future election laws. Marat Gelman, who was appointed by Putin's Kremlin to an executive position at the state-run Channel One, resigned the day after the Duma elections having accomplished the mission ordered of him: the communist party had been routed and United Russia had a super-majority. He even admitted as much about Putin and the regime: "They've got all the instruments as their disposal now and it is very dangerous."<sup>214</sup>

Constitutional changes did ensue. In the aftermath of the Beslan school tragedy in September 2004, Putin exploited people's fear regarding that incident to alter democratic processes in Russia. He, with super-majority legislative support, ended direct elections of governors and republic presidents. He also reformed election laws and procedures making it increasingly difficult for opposition groups and parties to pose serious challenges to Putin and United Russia's dominance within the democratic process.<sup>215</sup> The direct election of governors was eventually restored under Medvedev, to be altered again upon Putin's return in 2012. The Putinist center, nevertheless, held the peripheral democratic institutions under its boot, like the governors and regional legislatures. Regional authorities' position and career, be it the governor or bureaucrats, has become dependent on their ability to deliver election victories to the "party of power," namely Putin and United Russia.<sup>216</sup>

After his party's Duma victory, Putin's presidential election in early 2004 was characterized by an aura of inevitability according to Baker and Glasser. Putin refused to participate in debates and his Kremlin machine effectively dissuaded any real contenders from joining the race who could keep Putin from 50%. Knowing they would need to "confer a stamp of legitimacy on the race in the west," and especially the United States, Putin's machine tried to entice prominent democratic candidates to stay in the

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<sup>214</sup> Ibid., 311.

<sup>215</sup> Mendras, *Russian Politics: The Paradox of a Weak State*, 175.

<sup>216</sup> Golosov, "The Regional Roots of Electoral Authoritarianism in Russia," 636

race.<sup>217</sup> With the real potential of a 50% non-vote by the public after the three primary democratic candidates dropped out accusing the government of election and campaign fraud, the Putin apparatus was forced to rig the election results to show a 64% participation rate.<sup>218</sup>

Election manipulation in all subsequent elections would be so commonplace that by the time of the 2011/2012 election season, majorities of people polled (54%) firmly believed that Russian elections are and were routinely perverted to keep the ruling (Putinist) bureaucracy in power.<sup>219</sup> The so-called Putin-Medvedev tandem did not aid in dispelling those rumors. Russia generally welcomed the 2008 election results that placed a Putin ally, Dmitri Medvedev, into the presidency but kept Putin as Prime Minister. People feared a post-Putin return to instability and turmoil like the 1990s, ideas which Putin promoted as seen in the previous sections. People, therefore, supported the Medvedev candidacy knowing that Putin, and thereby assumedly the economic prosperity under Putin, would also remain.<sup>220</sup> Marie Mendras, however, considers the 2008 tandem arrangement as Putin's final circumvention of any constitutional limits on presidential power.<sup>221</sup> A consecutively two term-limited president could just become prime minister for a term and theoretically return after another presidential election, which is exactly what would happen in 2012. Sizable pluralities, if not majorities, of Russian people polled during the Medvedev years believed the new president was still controlled by Putin and his loyalists and that Putin's powerful control within government would continue regardless of when Putin himself left public office.<sup>222</sup>

The 2011/2012 election season, however, bore witness to something not yet seen during the era of Putin's hybrid regime: large mass-protests and riots over the

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<sup>217</sup> Baker and Glasser, *Kremlin Rising*, 318.

<sup>218</sup> Mendras, *Russian Politics: The Paradox of a Weak State*, 170.

<sup>219</sup> *Russian Public Opinion 2010–2011* (Moscow: Levada Analytical Center, 2012), 192.

<sup>220</sup> Mendras, *Russian Politics: The Paradox of a Weak State*, 178.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, 204.

<sup>222</sup> *Russian Public Opinion 2010–2011* (Moscow: Levada Analytical Center, 2012), 119–121.

issue of election fraud. Putinists had been “managing” the election outcomes for so many years; what was different this time? Marie Mendras offers a detailed analysis of the 2011–2012 government protests. She contends that people had finally gotten fed up with the now fourth managed election resulting in the same political party and individuals’ victories. People were genuinely disappointed over the Putin-Medvedev position switch, hoping Medvedev would run for President in his own right, even if still under Putin’s influence. This election cycle was the first one where overt and widespread proof of election fraud circulated through the populace, though not by Putin-controlled mass media outlets, but rather by social media and the Internet outside of Kremlin control.<sup>223</sup>

As mentioned in Chapter II, Putin condemned and sought to repress the protestors. Having witnessed the color revolutions of the previous decade and the ongoing Arab Spring uprisings against authoritarian rulers, Putin ridiculed the opposition movement as an orchestration and tool of American and Western interference upon Russian sovereignty. Putin’s election to the Presidency in 2012 was never in doubt, and, as seen in the previous chapter, his anti-American rhetoric did not die down with the successful suppression of the election protests. But the mere fact that the mass protests were allowed to occur, though not without varying levels of regime suppression, remains important to note. With it ever more difficult to check the regime through elections, could the public influence the regime through mass movement? That idea shall be further explored in latter sections of this chapter.

#### ***b. Political Parties***

As observed in the previous section, and summarized succinctly by Thomas Remington, Vladimir Putin effectively subjugated the Parliament and ushered in “a party system in which United Russia dominates regional and federal elections while opposition parties are sidelined.”<sup>224</sup> The political parties may be sidelined, but they are still allowed to exist, even if under increasingly bureaucratized legal regulations. The

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<sup>223</sup> Mendras, *Russian Politics: The Paradox of a Weak State*, 5–7.

<sup>224</sup> Thomas Remington, “Parliament and the Dominant Party Regime,” in *After Putin’s Russia*, ed Stephen Wegren and Dale Herspring, (Plymouth: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2010), 40.

problem, therefore, is not a total lack of political opposition to Putin and United Russia, but rather that the opposition lacks any true unity of agendas, leadership, or mass appeal.<sup>225</sup> The United Russia party, according to Ol'ga Kryshstanovskaya and Stephen White, does not represent a political ideology in the sense commonly observed in Western liberal democracies, but rather is a political party based on support of a man, Vladimir Putin, and his governing style.<sup>226</sup>

Therefore, in the course of Putin's second term, the series of electoral reforms that he initiated which curtailed political party activities and more strictly regulated funding, were, in effect, attacks on an already beaten enemy. The result being that by the end of Putin's second term, United Russia was the only party with widespread visibility and viability.<sup>227</sup> The other recognized and remotely organized parties appeal to too small a segment of the electorate for them to have any chance of upsetting United Russia or Putin in an election. But, as alluded to, a unified opposition party or coalition of parties that could appeal to the masses could, theoretically, challenge the regime. Unfortunately, such an amalgamation is unlikely to evolve in the near future.

### **C. ROLE OF ELITES AND THE PUBLIC IN PUTIN'S MACHINE: AN AUTOCRAT STILL ANSWERABLE TO OTHERS?**

If challenge to the Putin regime from elections and organized political party opposition, two principal democratic institutions, remains unlikely and difficult in the current environment, what, if anything, could challenge the regime? What danger exists that could result in the ouster of or force change to Putin's hybrid system? The Putin regime's survival remains in the hands of two segments of the society, and more specifically, their perpetual mutual ambivalence or abstention toward politics and public life: the elites and the general public. Neither one is likely to be able to challenge the

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<sup>225</sup> William Partlett, "Can Russia Keep Faking Democracy," Brookings Institution, May 22, 2012, <http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions>; Joakim Ekman, "Political Participation and Regime Stability: A Framework for Analyzing Hybrid Regimes," *International Political Science Review* 30, no. 1 (January 2009): 25.

<sup>226</sup> Ol'ga Kryshstanovskaya and Stephen White, "The Sovietization of Russian Politics," *Post-Soviet Affairs*, no. 25 (2009): 290.

<sup>227</sup> Golosov, "The Regional Roots of Electoral Authoritarianism in Russia," 636

Putinist system alone. Graeme Robertson notes that Putin and his allies have become extremely adept in the realm of “hybrid state-society relations.”<sup>228</sup> Robertson proposes that the Putin regime, rather than just using force like a true authoritarian and incurring additional criticism from Western democracies, has instituted a level of legal and bureaucratic control over the civil society. They include highly-restrictive and preventative measures to curb legally sanctioned mass demonstrations and protests and licensing requirements for public groups, like NGOs. Such measures, Robertson contends, were designed to create an “impression of permanence” around the regime to keep the scale of public movements small and thereby dissuade the elite class from fracturing and joining a public movement to form a viable opposition.<sup>229</sup>

If public dissatisfaction like that that was witnessed in 2011–2012 was able to attract the support of significant segments of the elite class, then a truly unified opposition movement might pose a credible challenge against “the man.” So, until both sectors of society are willing to simultaneously drop their acquiescence to the regime’s permanence, then Putin, like Napoleon, will strive to keep them divided and conquer each one’s isolated opposition as they arise. Putin also strives to keep both segments more scared of what could happen should his hybrid system fall, which is where anti-Americanism and fear instigation come into play.

## **1. Elites**

The Russian elites, be they business oligarchs, politicians, or something else, have been forced to figuratively sign a type of non-aggression pact with the Putinist regime. Putin, as discussed earlier in this chapter, sought to reconsolidate power back to the Kremlin from the Yeltsin-era oligarchs, along with the other aforementioned pre-Putin power-centers. Yeltsin-era oligarchs who publically opposed Putin’s re-centralization found themselves charged with corruption in the Russian courts. Boris Berezovsky and Vladimir Gusinsky were among the first of the powerful elites attacked by Putin’s

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<sup>228</sup> Graeme Robertson, “Managing Society: Protest, Civil Society, and Regime in Putin’s Russia,” *Slavic Review* 68, no. 3 (Fall 2009): 532.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, 545–546.

Kremlin and the courts early in Putin's first term. Both controlled assets in the petroleum and media sectors that Putin sought to re-implement state control over, to which the once powerful businessmen remained publically defiant. They were forced to flee the country and seek asylum in Europe.<sup>230</sup> Putin, after driving those two oligarchs from the country, issued a warning to the other elites, so eloquently paraphrased by Baker and Glasser: "keep out of politics or face his wrath."<sup>231</sup> Putin in 2003 then went after Mikhail Khodorkovsky, the wealthiest oil tycoon in Russia and owner of the Yukos Corporation. Khodorkovsky's arrest, trial, and imprisonment for alleged corruption would draw international attention and angst. A valuable subject for another time but too lengthy to discuss here, Khodorkovsky became the poster-boy for Putinist usurpation of the oligarch and elite class. He grew increasingly critical of Putin's regime and planned to use his wealth to influence politics and possibly run as a candidate against Putin himself.<sup>232</sup>

Putin had enforced his previous mandate: challenge the regime and lose everything. Unabridged loyalty to the regime or at least non-involvement in politics among the oligarchs and elite class became the *modus operandi*. Putin had effectively instituted negative incentives for loyalty.<sup>233</sup> The oligarchs and elites that demonstrate loyalty to the regime are thus rewarded. Karen Dawisha refers to the entire system as a "corporatist-kleptocratic regime," in which many of the elites' personal interests have become state interests.<sup>234</sup> Loyalty to Putin, thereby, has conferred upon many elites the benefits of state resources and influences to help the elites achieve their personal gains. Putin business and elite loyalists continue to grow rich through state contracts with Putin-controlled companies, though the paper-trail of such corruption never implicates Putin

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<sup>230</sup> Baker and Glasser, *Kremlin Rising*, 277.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid., 284.

<sup>233</sup> Vladimir Gel'man, "Subnational Authoritarianism in Russia," *Russian Analytical Digest*, no 67 (November 9, 2009): 4.

<sup>234</sup> Karen Dawisha, "Is Russia's Foreign Policy That of a Corporatist-Kleptocratic Regime?" *Post-Soviet Affairs* 27, no. 4 (2011), 332.

himself.<sup>235</sup> Powerful people within the criminal underworld, too, escape arrest and persecution by the Putinist state in exchange for favors to the Putinists.<sup>236</sup>

The elites that are not ardent Putinists, but simply “go along to get along” and survive, represent the most dangerous type of elite: potentially disaffected and secretly waiting to pounce upon a weakened regime. That signal of weakness, according to Robertson, could come in the form of a seemingly uncontrollable public outrage, as we shall see in the next section.<sup>237</sup>

## **2. The Public at Large**

The Putinist regime has become less and less accountable to the traditional mechanisms of government accountability, like elections, legislative checks and balances, etc. Nikolai Petrov et al. conclude that Russians recognize this fact and also recognize that the only means still available to them to influence the regime must emanate from outside the traditional hybrid-democratic system: mass movements in the form of protests, riots, etc.<sup>238</sup> But why did the public allow themselves to become complacent and seemingly ignore the authoritarian re-emergence? The answer lies again in the Yeltsin years. As detailed earlier in this chapter, the public tacitly accepted a curtailment of liberal democratic freedoms and institutions in favor of economic, political, and national stability, which they perceived as having been accomplished by Vladimir Putin.<sup>239</sup> In so doing, Putin had successfully convinced the populace that the Yeltsinian/American model of governance would not suffice, so Russian attitude toward an Americanized system or anything resembling it in Russia grew equally acrimonious.

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<sup>235</sup> Andrew Kramer and David Herszenhorn, “Midas Touch in St. Petersburg: Friends of Putin Glow Brightly,” *The New York Times*, March 1, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/02>.

<sup>236</sup> Charles Clover, “Who Runs Russia?” *Financial Times*, December 16, 2011, <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms>.

<sup>237</sup> Robertson, “Managing Society: Protest, Civil Society, and Regime in Putin’s Russia,” 546.

<sup>238</sup> Petrov et al., “Overmanaged Democracy in Russia: Governance Implications of Hybrid Regimes,” 26.

<sup>239</sup> Mendras, *Russian Politics: The Paradox of a Weak State*, 186.

Economic improvement, therefore, became the backdrop for the public's continued apathetic approach to their government and public life. Stephen Kotkin further elaborates on the apolitical-ness of Russian society, especially the robust, but quiet, middle class. Most of Russia's middle class serve either the government or government-influenced businesses and, therefore, employ political standoffishness as a strategy to hopefully keep their wealth and access to superior services inherent in middle-class status.<sup>240</sup> David Remnick supports a similar notion, that Russia's middle class is "still more interested in prosperity than in law or democracy."<sup>241</sup> Marie Mendras details the public's relative acceptance, if not happiness, at the notion of Putin staying within the higher government authority in 2008. People hoped his presence would avert the loss of their newfound wealth with a return to Yeltsin-era troubles.<sup>242</sup>

Vladimir Shlapentokh goes further. Citing polling data in 2005, he attributes the public's trust and acceptance of Putin toward their widespread distrust of the other democratic institutions, like Parliament, political parties, and the media. Putin, thereby, receives a default vote of confidence from the public because all other social and political institutions capable of offering order have been summarily discredited.<sup>243</sup> One cannot overestimate Putin's success in demonizing Russia's experiments in American and Western democratic and political institutions.

Putin, therefore, *needs* the public's support or, like the elites, at least their ambivalence. Without it, and as opinion of the Putin regime and its actions becomes more negative, mass public movements like those seen in 2011–2012 could become more commonplace. Much of Putin's public support is "rational" according to Daniel Treisman; it is rational support for ongoing economic prosperity and rational support for

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<sup>240</sup> Stephen Kotkin, "Russia under Putin: Toward Democracy or Dictatorship?" *Foreign Policy Research Institute* (March 2007), <http://www.fpri.org/enotes>.

<sup>241</sup> Remnick, "The Civil Archipelago: How far can the resistance to Vladimir Putin go?"

<sup>242</sup> Mendras, *Russian Politics: The Paradox of a Weak State*, 178.

<sup>243</sup> Vladimir Shlapentokh, "Trust in public institutions in Russia: The lowest in the world," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 39, no. 2 (June 2006).



a strong, determined, competent and capable leader according to Colton and Hale.<sup>244</sup> If those lynchpins of his popularity were to someday disappear, Putin's hybrid state structure could be in jeopardy. Putin, therefore, needs more than just coincidental economic success under his reign and the Russian peoples' general affinity for a strongman. And as we shall witness in Chapter IV, anti-Americanism, always a critical factor of Vladimir Putin's psychology, and already employed in democratic elections, can also be employed as a means to garner and retain domestic political "support."

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

Vladimir Putin, in his May 2000 First Inaugural Address, celebrated the virtues of democracy and promised to uphold, preserve, and advance the democratic government that he had inherited.<sup>245</sup> That would imply he intended to advance the liberal constitutionalism (i.e. American/Western democracy) originally envisioned in the early 1990s. Contrast that address to his Second Inaugural in May 2004 in which the word democracy or any derivative thereof failed to gain mention even once.<sup>246</sup> By the time of his second term, Putin's authoritarian resurgence was in full swing, resulting in a hybrid democratic-authoritarian governing system that has persisted to this day. Marie Mendras attributes Putin's anti-liberal democratic retreat as much to his change in stance toward the United States and the West. During his first term, he still valued the Western democracies opinions regarding the liberal-democratic nature of the new Russia; by his second term, he did not.<sup>247</sup> This assertion fits in line with the observations noted in Chapter II regarding Putin's later-term policy shifts vis-à-vis Russia as an independent global power center in lieu of integration with America and the West.

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<sup>244</sup> Daniel Treisman, "Presidential Popularity in a Hybrid Regime: Russia under Yeltsin and Putin," *American Journal of Political Science* 55, no. 3 (July 2011): 607, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23024939>; Colton and Hale, "The Putin Vote: Presidential Electorates in a Hybrid Regime," 502.

<sup>245</sup> Vladimir Putin, "2000 Putin Inauguration Speech," May 7, 2000, <http://www.fas.org/news/russia/2000/000507-rus-putin.htm>.

<sup>246</sup> Vladimir Putin, "Putin's Inauguration Speech," *RIA Novosti*, May 7, 2004, <http://en.rian.ru/onlinenews/20040507/39915756.html>.

<sup>247</sup> Mendras, *Russian Politics: The Paradox of a Weak State*, 151.

This chapter has established the nature of Vladimir Putin's hybrid regime in Russia. Stephen Kotkin provides an eloquent summation to the general consensus about that nature of Russian government and politics: "a ramshackle authoritarian system with some democratic trappings."<sup>248</sup> The authoritarian aspects often garner the most attention from outside observers: resource theory and media control, cronyism, state persecution of (potential) opposition leaders and groups, etc. But the remnants of democratic foundations could, in theory, pose a risk to the Putinist regime's longevity as much as any popular backlash against its more repressive tendencies, which explains the necessity of the regime to employ authoritarian mechanisms to rigidly control the remaining democratic practices. Elections must be held but rigged to ensure Putinist victories; opposition political parties must be allowed to exist but bureaucratically forced into an insurmountable competitive disadvantage compared to the ruling Putinist party.

The Russian people, by and large, enjoy the benefits of post-Communist consumerism. As Dmitri Trenin writes, however, Putin's Russia exists in a state of "growth without development, capitalism without democracy, and great power policies without international appeal."<sup>249</sup> As long as Russians remain economically well-off compared to the much-demonized Yeltsin years, they are more likely to fray from the public sphere and maintain a default vote of confidence in Putin and his less-than-liberal constitutionalism.

The public alone is unlikely to be able to force the hand of the regime, even if disenchanted with Putin and mobilized onto the streets like in 2011. A union of elites and the masses, however, could bring the hybrid system to its knees, making the authoritarian's need to keep one or both segments loyal, or at least ambivalent, that much more pressing. Economic success can placate the masses and the elites. A general consensus has emerged that fossil fuel prices more than any other factor spurred Russia's economic recovery, and thereby political stability around Putin during the 2000s, a theory

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<sup>248</sup> Kotkin, "Russia under Putin: Toward Democracy or Dictatorship?"

<sup>249</sup> Trenin, *Post-Imperium: A Eurasian Story*, 240.

supported by Daniel Treisman, among many others.<sup>250</sup> What happens if and when the oil money dries up? What happens if the widespread public prosperity due to natural resource exports is reversed and the Putinist system is unable to force an economic recovery?

The coincidence of economic improvement under Putin has helped keep the masses mollified. Likewise, the threat of regime-imposed poverty upon the elites has similarly forced their abstention from the political sphere. Putin has repressed those powerful elites that dare to offer criticism or challenge to his government, be they business oligarchs, political leaders, crime bosses, etc. The prime reward for loyalty or ambivalence is survival; the cost for disloyalty or involvement is the loss of everything that makes them rich and powerful. Putin, during a meeting of the business elites a few months after his first presidential election, threatened to “revise the results of privatization,” unless they collectively shied from political involvement and criticism of his government.<sup>251</sup> Some got the lesson, some did not.

A person’s wallet, therefore, creates a powerful incentive, whether the person is just a middle class worker, or a corporate billionaire. If the billionaires and the workers find common cause to challenge the regime, be it over an economic collapse or political corruption, then Putin could find himself demonized and discredited like he had done to his predecessor, Boris Yeltsin. Some of authoritarian tools available to Putin to ensure the survival of his hybrid system have been outlined in this chapter, as well as how anti-Yeltsinism can be equated as anti-*any semblance of American-style government*. This chapter has established how Putin is, or could be, accountable to the elites and public and the necessity of keeping them beholden to him. Chapter IV will explore Putin’s employment of anti-Americanism in his domestic realm, and how truly widespread anti-Americanism is in Russia beyond Putin’s Kremlin’s machine. Anti-Americanism has

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<sup>250</sup> Daniel Treisman, “Presidential Popularity in a Hybrid Regime: Russia under Yeltsin and Putin,” *American Journal of Political Science* 55, no. 3 (July 2011): 607, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23024939>.

<sup>251</sup> Baker and Glasser, *Kremlin Rising*, 87.

become yet another asset in his authoritarian toolbox, in conjunction with those mentioned in this chapter, all designed to reap continued political benefits like public and elite support, or at least their distraction.

## IV. THE POLITICS OF ANTI-AMERICANISM

Vladimir Putin did not conjure widespread Russian anti-Americanism from scratch upon his ascension to power on December 31, 1999. It had existed around the globe and among the world populace as well as within Russian politicians, elites, and the public for some time. Global anti-Americanism in the 1990s, according to Fouad Ajami, was much more rampant than many passively observed, and that post 9/11 sympathies for America were insincere and fleeting. Historical animosity toward America, thereby, cannot be supplanted but only temporarily hidden.<sup>252</sup> Much of the recent global anti-Americanism has been attributed to recent U.S. actions and policy, like those within the Global War on Terror, Iraq, and economic globalization. Russian anti-Americanism can also be attributed to the Soviet past and the history of the ideology surrounding the anti-Imperialist/Western class struggle. This “old” form of anti-Americanism still underlies the “new” form anchored in hatred of current U.S. policies, global influence, and lifestyle.<sup>253</sup> Chapter II detailed the manner in which Putin’s inherent anti-Americanism was hidden for a time. A lingering product of Soviet times, Russian anti-Americanism in the early 1990s under then President Yeltsin, therefore, simply lay dormant, waiting to resurface, which it did most notably during the Balkan crises of the later 1990s, followed by resurgent global anti-Americanism during the run-up to the 2003 Iraq invasion and its aftermath.<sup>254</sup>

Chapter II offered an explanation regarding the nature and historical roots of Vladimir Putin’s anti-Americanism. This chapter shall offer a subsequent analysis of the nature and history of the anti-Americanism of the Russian public and the Russian elites, the two segments of society in which Putin’s hybrid-authoritarian hold on power are contingent, as discussed in Chapter III. More than a decade’s worth of polling data on

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<sup>252</sup> Fouad Ajami, “The Falseness of Anti-Americanism,” *Foreign Policy*, no. 138 (September-October 2003): 58, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3183656>.

<sup>253</sup> Eric Shiraev and Vladislav Zubok, *Anti-Americanism in Russia from Stalin to Putin* (New York: Palgrave, 2000), 2.

<sup>254</sup> Ole R. Holsti, *To See Ourselves as Others See Us: How Publics Abroad View the United States after 9/11* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 46.

the nature and character of the Russian public's anti-Americanism will be referenced as evidence showing that the level of the public's hostility toward America tends to parallel the level of anti-American vociferousness emanating from Putin's Kremlin, as measured by its messages/propaganda. Chapter III detailed the resource theory behind that message and propaganda control. As Putin's anti-American displays increase in number and vociferousness, the general anti-American mood of his populace also increases.

Additionally, a study of the Russian elites' anti-Americanism over the same timeframe will show how their hostility pre-dates Putin's presidency and has become a necessary personal characteristic for advancement or survival within the regime and within the remnant democratic processes. Chapter II detailed Putin's inherent nature that makes him truly anti-American. He has shown a persistent attitude and widespread animosity to all things American, which is how Katzenstein, Keohane, and Krastev define anti-Americanism.<sup>255</sup> This chapter shall demonstrate that anti-Americanism has been employed by Putin as tool to demonstrate solidarity with his constituents, both the public and the elites. Such solidarity also entails distraction for those society segments from the more potentially damaging domestic problems during Putin's entire tenure in office, problems that Russia has faced, is facing, or that lie just over the horizon. Anti-Americanism as an authoritarian domestic political tool, therefore, can garner significant benefits for the authoritarian who utilizes it.

#### **A. POLLING PERSPECTIVE ON THE RUSSIAN PUBLICS' ANTI-AMERICANISM**

The intensity of the Russian populace's anti-Americanism, defined previously as a general antipathy toward most things American, may appear consistent, but is really anything but. Its roots "do not go very deep" according to Vladimir Shlapentokh, who claims that the Putinist state and its media control are to blame for any rampant anti-Americanism in Russia. Changes in regime and media tone would likely subdue widespread anti-Americanism in the countryside. As examined in Chapter III, with

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<sup>255</sup> Katzenstein and Keohane, *Anti-Americanism in World Politics*, 12; Krastev, "The Anti-American Century," 7.

control of the major mass-media, Putin, like the Soviets, can manipulate the level of anti-American news or propaganda that reaches the Russian population and thereby directly control their level of anti-Americanism. So the current Russian public's anti-Americanism may be widespread, but it is not psychologically deep-rooted compared to Putin and many elites.<sup>256</sup>

According to the Levada Center, one of the pre-eminent organizations that has been gauging Russian public opinion since the late 1980s, vast majorities of people polled from 2003 through 2011 consider the United States to be an aggressor state seeking influence or outright control of other countries. During that same timeframe, large pluralities or even small majorities consistently rate relations between the United States and Russia positively with less than a majority, and often as low as 25%, believing the United States is inherently unfriendly or hostile toward the Russian Federation.<sup>257</sup> Within such data, however, when observed over the course of several years, marked fluctuations are observed. Russian public opinion toward the United States often oscillates as much as relations between the two states varies from “allies” to “friends” to “partners” to “colleagues” to “enemies” and back again.

### **1. The Pre-Putin Years**

After the fall of the communist state, the Russian public attitude toward the United States ballooned to near jubilant levels in the early Yeltsin years. The Russian populace blamed the dying Soviet system, and therefore Mikhail Gorbachev, for their rotten existence, springing an overwhelming rush to support Boris Yeltsin and his promises of democratic and capitalistic reforms that would bring materialistic wealth back to the Russian people. U.S. support for Yeltsin and other democratic reformers, as well as condemnation of the 1991 coup attempt, subsequently induced a dramatic wave of pro-Americanism.<sup>258</sup> Such resounding pro-Americanism would not last.

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<sup>256</sup> Vladimir Shlapentokh, “The Puzzle of Russian Anti-Americanism: From ‘Below’ or From ‘Above,’” *Europe-Asia Studies* 63, no. 5 (2011), 875–876.

<sup>257</sup> “Russian Public Opinion 2010–2011” (Moscow: Levada Analytical Center, 2012), 276, 292, 293.

<sup>258</sup> Eric Shiraev and Vladislav Zubock, *Anti-Americanism in Russia from Stalin to Putin* (New York: Palgrave, 2000), 27, 32..

Russian media's portrayal of America directly attributed to reduced Russian public anti-Americanism in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Gorbachev's perestroika and glasnost reforms resulted in a freer media that, devoid of state-mandated anti-Western propaganda, could in turn focus its criticism upon the failings of the communist system and its leaders and provide more positive portrayals of those entities opposed to the status-quo Soviet system: Yeltsin and America.<sup>259</sup> The subsequent Yeltsin years, in which democratic and capitalistic reforms sought to turn Russian into a Western-style state in short order, also included a media network largely free from significant government interference. In the early 1990s, the newly free Russian media's focus remained the perpetual denouncing of communism and extolling the virtues of American liberalism.<sup>260</sup>

Within a few years, the initial pro-American ecstasy was wearing thin. By 1993, under conditions of ongoing economic troubles and political turmoil, the Russian peoples' lives had failed to improve on the scale originally promised by Yeltsin. The "beginning of disillusionment" toward American-style democracy and capitalism had been sown.<sup>261</sup> A study conducted in 1995 among young Russian adults bears similar conclusions. The study group had shown an initial widespread affinity for an Americanized way of life in the immediate aftermath of the Soviet collapse. By 1995, however, a growing number had become significantly less sympathetic to America and the West. As many people within the group now questioned American power, influence, and lifestyle as the number of those who still aspired to a Western-styled existence.<sup>262</sup> Because of the failure of Yeltsin's reforms in the public's everyday life, the public's negative perceptions of any Americanized political, economic, and social system in Russia were also growing. Their rotten experience on the path toward Americanized life

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<sup>259</sup> Shiraev and Zubock, *Anti-Americanism in Russia from Stalin to Putin*, 30.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>262</sup> Richard Dobson and Anatole Shub, *Russia's Future: Perspectives of Young Russians, 1994–1995* (Washington: U.S. Information Agency, 1995, R-1–95), 7.



helped generate or re-surface an attitude of broad anti-*anything American*. That attitude serves as the basis of anti-Americanism as previously defined.

As U.S.-Russian tensions increased in the later 1990s, in conjunction with continually deteriorating domestic chaos for Yeltsin, the Kremlin stopped pressuring the media to refrain from anti-American news and exposés. The Kremlin instead sought to direct some of the rampant anti-Yeltsin criticism toward the United States. Anti-American news and portrayals increased in the later years of Yeltsin's tenure as the Balkan and Kosovo crises spiraled. This provided a benefit of distracting the Russian populace from their domestic troubles and re-focusing their frustrations toward an external "scapegoat:" America.<sup>263</sup> Putin would later perfect this tactic.

The 1990s, as turbulent as they were for the Russian populace in the politico-economic arenas, proved equally turbulent in their views toward the United States. From euphoria as the Soviet Union fell, to disillusionment as the promised benefits of the Americanized system failed to materialize, to outright vocal hostility over American actions on the international scene, especially in Europe. "Uncle Sam was blamed for starting and escalating the war in Kosovo."<sup>264</sup> Shiraev and Zubock assert that some moderate proportion of the Russian population, approximately 30%, held consistent anti-American views throughout the 1990s.<sup>265</sup> Vladimir Putin, an intrinsic anti-American himself, therefore, would climb to authority at a time when the Russian public had grown increasingly receptive to more anti-Americanism.

## **2. Under Putin: Fluctuating or as Steady as Putin?**

Russian public anti-Americanism during the Putin years would seem to vary as much as relations between the two states vary. On face value, the Russian people's attitude toward the United States also appears to conform closely with global trends during this timeframe. There appear, however, distinctive periods of peak pro/anti-

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<sup>263</sup> Vladimir Shlapentokh, "The Hatred of Others: The Kremlin's Powerful but Risky Weapon," *World Affairs* 169, no. 3 (Winter 2007), 137.

<sup>264</sup> Shiraev and Zubock, *Anti-Americanism in Russia from Stalin to Putin*, 92.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

Americanism within the numbers. 9/11 resulted in a global wave of sympathy for the United States, as well as within Russia; Putin's immediate offering of assistance garnered massive popular support from the Russian people.<sup>266</sup> Polling conducted between 2002 and 2007 showed similar vast majorities in support of Putin's policies involving Russian support of the wider Global War on Terrorism.<sup>267</sup> Putin and his people were on the same page in backing a pro-American policy at the time and an anti-terror policy once favor with America had worn out. But underneath the public's sympathy, supporting the findings of Fouad Ajami, resided a still remnant hostility toward the United States. Polling in 2001 and 2002 indicated a level of schadenfreude among the Russian populace, with majorities believing that America got what it deserved on 9/11 for U.S. actions like Hiroshima, Nagasaki, the Gulf War and ongoing actions against Iraq, and military action in Yugoslavia/Kosovo.<sup>268</sup>

Figure 1 represents a running polling analysis of the general Russian popular attitude toward the United States starting in 1997. It measures the net difference in positive compared to negative responses among participants. A data point above the zero line indicates more people demonstrating a positive attitude than negative attitude toward America. A data point below the zero line indicates the reciprocal. As Figure 1 shows, the timeframe from 1998–1999 saw a dramatic turn toward a net-negative attitude among the populace. As discussed in the previous section, that timeframe coincides with Balkan crises as well as renewed anti-American news and propaganda portrayals from Yeltsin's Kremlin and the Russian media.

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<sup>266</sup> Ole Holsti, *To See Ourselves as Others See Us: How Publics Abroad View the United States after 9/11* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 21.

<sup>267</sup> "Russian Public Opinion 2007" (Moscow: Levada Analytical Center, 2008), 186.

<sup>268</sup> "Russian Public Opinion 2010–2011" (Moscow: Levada Analytical Center, 2012), 294.

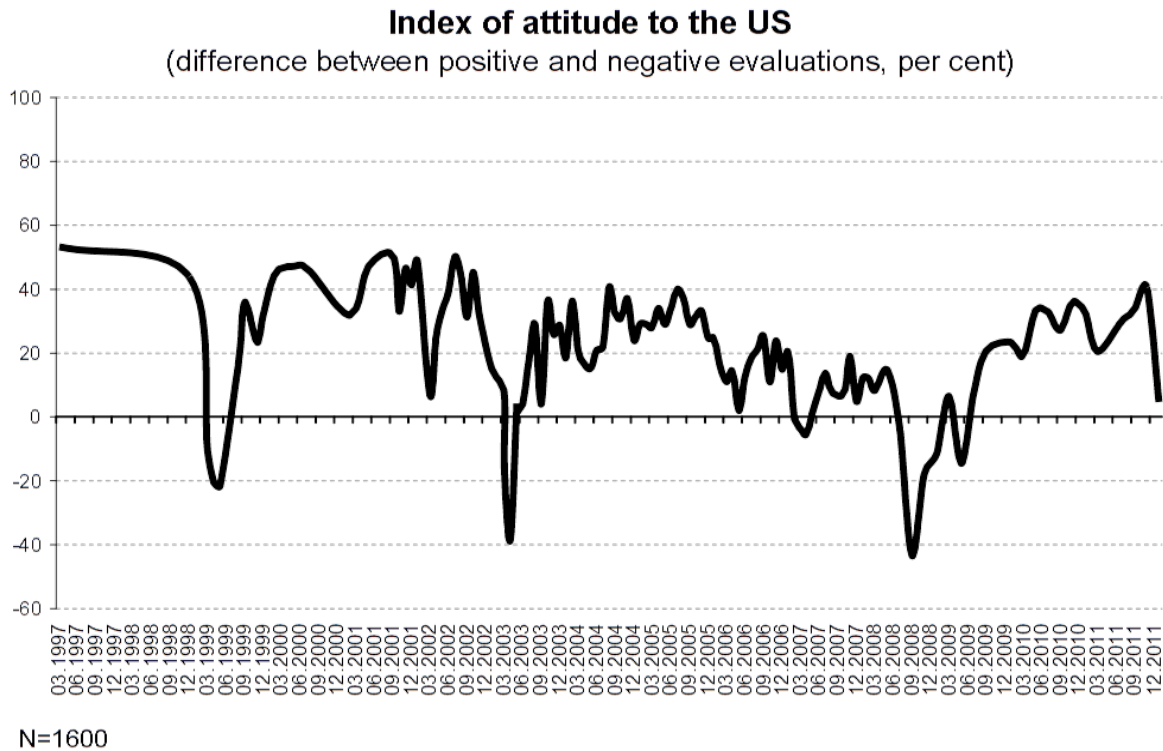


Figure 1. Index of Russians' Attitude to the United States 1997–2011<sup>269</sup>

Global anti-Americanism increased rapidly in the run-up and aftermath of the 2003 Iraq invasion. As Putin distanced himself further and further from the United States as detailed in Chapter II, so too did the Russian public's animosity toward America grow. After the Iraq invasion, 66% of Russians deemed U.S. military prowess as a major factor in creating an unsafe world; only 24% were happy that Saddam Hussein's army folded so quickly during the invasion, instead hoping America would face a more difficult operation.<sup>270</sup> Putin's initial strangling of anti-American media reports during the first phases of the war soon were lifted, resulting in a wave of anti-American stories, subjective reports, and anti-American rhetoric from Kremlin allies about conditions in Iraq.<sup>271</sup> The second major net-negative spike in Figure 1 correlates to the same

<sup>269</sup> "Russian Public Opinion 2010–2011" (Moscow: Levada Analytical Center, 2012), 292.

<sup>270</sup> Holsti, *To See Ourselves as Others See Us*, 31, 52.

<sup>271</sup> Masha Lipman, "Russia's Politics of Anti-Americanism," *The Washington Post*, April 6, 2003, <http://www.washingtonpost.com>.

timeframe of the Iraq War and the Russian media's never-ending critical coverage of it. As the decade continued and Putinist media persisted to trounce upon and over-exaggerate anti-American news, the Russian public's anti-Americanism continued to sharpen. Figure 1 shows the quarterly fluctuations from 2003–2008, but an extrapolated trend line would show that the overall trend slopes toward increasingly more negative attitudes toward the United States, with the net-positive never again reaching the mid-1990s level.

Putin's second term became marked by repeated attacks on alleged American and Western interference in Russian affairs. The population seemed to accept such anti-American propaganda as the Kremlin portrayed it. 57% of the population in 2007 deemed any Western criticism of Russia as an improper intervention in Russian domestic affairs, with a plurality calling U.S. criticisms of Russian human rights unjustifiable.<sup>272</sup> Year by year from 2001–2010, majorities of the public considered U.S. BMD development and deployment one of the greatest threats to Russian security.<sup>273</sup> Those instances are exactly what Putin and his authoritarian media machines had been preaching for years, showing just how accepting the Russian populace had become of whatever anti-American spin the Kremlin wanted to attach to any issue. Similarly, in 2007, 80% believed the United States definitely or likely was attempting to interfere in Russian internal affairs and almost 50% believed Putin should, in turn, adopt a much firmer and more confrontational posture toward the United States.<sup>274</sup> Figure 1 shows a third net-negative attitude peak in 2007 as Putin's contorted propaganda effectively convinced his populace of a non-existent threat from America. His populace demanded a harder line toward the American threat, thereby justifying further anti-Americanism on the part of Putin's Kremlin. A self-perpetuating cycle or feedback loop had developed.

The fourth major peak period of Russian public anti-Americanism occurred also in conjunction with a peak period of Putinist propaganda against the United States and

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<sup>272</sup> "Foreign Criticism of Human Rights in Russia," Russian Public Opinion Research Center, Press Release no. 693, May 21, 2007, <http://wciom.com/index.php?id=61>.

<sup>273</sup> "Russian Public Opinion 2010–2011" (Moscow: Levada Analytical Center, 2012), 273.

<sup>274</sup> "Russian Public Opinion 2007" (Moscow: Levada Analytical Center, 2018), 187.

West: during the 2008 conflict with Georgia. The net negative peak on Figure 1 in the 2008 timeframe clearly demonstrates this. American and Western denunciations of Russian aggression in the South Caucasus state were widespread. At the height of the crisis, the vast majority of Russians believed their country had “legitimate” enemies in the world, and 51% of that group unequivocally considered America one of those enemies.<sup>275</sup> There was a similar spike that year in the number of people (45%) believing America was openly unfriendly or hostile to Russia, whereas most other years that number hovered around 25%.<sup>276</sup>

On the question of public perception of the nature of U.S.-Russian relations, from 2001–2011, majorities considered the two states’ relations to be either “normal, good, or friendly,” except when measured in the years 2008 and 2011, in which case majorities viewed the relations as “lukewarm, tense, or hostile.”<sup>277</sup> 2009 represents an interesting year, the year of the much scrutinized Obama-Medvedev “reset.” The new presidents cordial relations coincided with an easing in anti-American sentiment within Russia, as 66% polled believed Obama should not follow the course set by George W. Bush.<sup>278</sup> 2009 witnessed a renewed majority-positive attitude toward the United States, around 50%.<sup>279</sup> The number of people considering America a blatant enemy of Russia also dropped during the early stages of the reset.<sup>280</sup> Figure 1 shows the dramatic rise in net-positive attitude during the first years of the Obama administration 2009–2010. The Putinist anti-American machine temporarily eased its vociferousness under Medvedev, though it would not remain restrained for long.

The 2011–2012 public protests and election cycle brought renewed anti-American hostility from the Putinist Kremlin and political machine. Prime Minister Putin, running

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<sup>275</sup> Russian Public Opinion 2010–2011” (Moscow: Levada Analytical Center, 2012), 274.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid., 276.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid., 292.

<sup>278</sup> “Russians Give Barack Obama Advice,” Russian Public Opinion Research Center, Press Release no. 1137, January 29, 2009, <http://wciom.com/index.php?id=61>.

<sup>279</sup> “U.S.-Russia: Monitoring Bilateral Relations,” Russian Public Opinion Research Center, Press Release no. 1521, February 25, 2013, <http://wciom.com/index.php?id=61>.

<sup>280</sup> “Russian Public Opinion 2010–2011” (Moscow: Levada Analytical Center, 2012), 274.

again for President, as discussed in Chapter II, mobilized his machine to denounce protesters and political opponents as American stooges and traitors.<sup>281</sup> The public took notice of the Putinist hostility and again gauged U.S.-Russian relations on a negative trend as mentioned above, and Figure 1 shows the sharp 2011 drop toward a net-negative attitude rating. If the polling sample continued into the first quarters of 2012, there would likely have been another net-negative peak on this graphic. 23% of the people adamantly believed the Putinist claims that America organized the protests to topple the Russian government; 22% concluded that Putin was simply spreading misinformation about the protesters' foreign ties to discredit them.<sup>282</sup>

A common thread is seen within the Russian public's anti-American polling numbers: the numbers do fluctuate on a parallel pattern with the anti-American rhetoric and policy of their government, which is controlled by Putin. Putin controls the government and the mass-media and, therefore, is able to control the anti-Americanism of his public constituents. If Putin needs a more anti-American public, he can employ his government machine to show his anti-Americanism more vociferously which results in a more anti-American public mood. If Putin's Kremlin eased its anti-Americanism, the public perceptions would largely follow suit, a conclusion largely supported in the studies by Vladimir Shlapentokh.<sup>283</sup> Peak periods of anti-Americanism in Putin's Russia correspond to peak periods of anti-American propaganda from Putin-controlled authoritarian machinations which thereby bring peak periods of tension in Russian-American relations.

## **B. ANTI-AMERICANISM OF THE ELITES**

The Russian public's renewed anti-American bitterness can be traced back to the 1990s. The anti-Americanism of the Russian elites, especially those that operated within the new democratic public sphere, can also be traced back to a similar timeframe. The

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<sup>281</sup> Vladimir Isachenkov, "Anti-Americanism key to Putin's campaign," *Associated Press*, February 17, 2012.

<sup>282</sup> "Russian Public Opinion 2010–2011" (Moscow: Levada Analytical Center, 2012), 197.

<sup>283</sup> Vladimir Shlapentokh, "The Puzzle of Russian Anti-Americanism: From 'Below' or From 'Above,'" *Europe-Asia Studies* 63, no. 5 (2011), 886.

elites, as discussed, represent the other critical power base for Putin's regime's survival, along with widespread public "support." Putin must appeal to both bases, which becomes much easier when both bases share common beliefs or general attitudes, like those inherent in anti-Americanism. The Russian elites in turn, as the section will discuss, feed off and exploit the anti-Americanism of the public. Noxious anti-Americanism from the elite segment of society, however, pre-dates its spawn within the general public. As Shlapentokh further argues, the anti-Americanism of the elites remains much deeper and more hostile than that of the populace.<sup>284</sup> This notion was demonstrated by the public polling fluctuations in the previous section. More recently, Shlapentokh re-asserted similar conclusions, holding that the elites adhere to and subsequently aid in the propagation of the anti-American ideology of Russia's ruling class, namely Putin's.<sup>285</sup>

### **1. Disenchantment Under Yeltsin**

As mentioned previously, a significant segment of the Russian public, around 25%, held perpetual anti-American proclivities regardless of external factors or stimuli. "If there is a public opinion base, there will be politicians who can and will represent these views on the level of elite politics."<sup>286</sup> In very early 1990s, as Shiraev and Zubock allude, there already existed anti-American elites in the public sphere, though they were often overshadowed by pro-Yeltsin affiliated officials. But soon the numbers of anti-American public-elite figures would mushroom. As the public became increasingly crestfallen by the lack of economic and political progress under Boris Yeltsin, the political classes in Russia paralleled that disillusionment. The elites grew increasingly hostile toward Yeltsin's pro-American/Western policies designed to turn Russia into a state like those in the West. By 1993, large blocs within the Duma voiced opposition to Yeltsin's pro-American foreign and domestic policies. This compelled the Yeltsin government at times to concede to their hostile domestic opposition by increasing anti-

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<sup>284</sup> Vladimir Shlapentokh, "Russian Attitudes toward America: A Split between the Ruling Class and the Masses," *World Affairs* 164, no. 1 (Summer 2001), 17.

<sup>285</sup> Vladimir Shlapentokh, "The Puzzle of Russian Anti-Americanism: From 'Below' or From 'Above,'" *Europe-Asia Studies* 63, no. 5 (2011), 875.

<sup>286</sup> Shiraev and Zubock, *Anti-Americanism in Russia from Stalin to Putin*, 92.

American rhetoric from official Kremlin channels, though official policies initially remained unchanged.<sup>287</sup>

The elites in Russia, specifically the political class, had grown increasingly anti-American long before the Yeltsin government did and effectively dragged the Yeltsin government with them. In January 1996, only a few months before a presidential election, Yeltsin, faced with an overwhelming anti-American/Western opposition in the parliament, conceded to another one of their demands and dismissed the pro-American Foreign Minister Kozyrev, even though he and Yeltsin shared similar foreign policy ambitions for Russia.<sup>288</sup> Yeltsin had been forced to placate the anti-American wolves within his government and replaced Kozyrev with Yevgeny Primakov. Primakov oversaw a reversal in Russian pro-American foreign policy that Yeltsin, now bowing to the anti-American dominated political classes, did not inhibit.<sup>289</sup>

## **2. Anti-Americanism to Demonstrate one's Political Bona Fides**

As the anti-American elite political class grew ever larger, forcing the once pro-American Yeltsin government to conform, eventually the entire notion of a pro-American official in politics seemed impossible. The political tides were shifting further and further from the initial American embrace in the immediate aftermath of the Soviet collapse. Americanism, as detailed in previous chapters, had fallen into disfavor as the Yeltsin-American experiment continued to languish. Yeltsin's domestic political opposition, who were overtly anti-American as discussed above, targeted and exploited all facets of Yeltsinian policies, to include his relationship with the United States.<sup>290</sup> American and Western actions on the global scene during the 1990s further played into the hands of the anti-Yeltsin (i.e., anti-democratic) and nationalist opposition forces in Russia. Military action in the Balkans, bombings in Iraq, NATO expansion, etc., all contributed to an

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<sup>287</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>288</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid., 107.



“increased perception of growing intimidation from the West and the United States.”<sup>291</sup> The result by the later 1990s was palpable: no person could hope to survive in Russian electoral politics possessing a pro-American agenda. Westernizer politicians like those under Yeltsin in the early 1990s had vanished. Anti-Americanism, therefore, became a political necessity among the elites who wished to operate in the public domain.

By the time Putin came to prominence in 1999, therefore, anti-Americanism was present in both of the segments of society that he needed. He would never need to worry about some pro-American/Western opposition. The positive notion of any politician of such a disposition had been thoroughly eviscerated. Shlapentokh goes even further to assert that most of the anti-American elite developed a selective disposition to witness anything in America and the West in negative and paranoid light, like Putin.<sup>292</sup> Politicians and elites that think and act like Putin in regards to America, thereby, are less likely be branded as Western-lackeys and survive elections with Putin’s backing, or at least his non-opposition. 80% of Russians firmly believe their politicians only care about getting elected and do not care about doing things for the voters.<sup>293</sup> And in Russia, as discussed in Chapter III, one’s election to office in Putin’s democracy is as dependent on Putin as it is on the voters.

### **C. PUTIN’S POLITICAL BENEFITS FROM ANTI-AMERICANISM**

Vladimir Putin owes his now fourteen year hold on power as much to the tools employed within his hybrid democratic-authoritarian system as to any genuine democratic appeal he may have. Anti-Americanism has become a critical element in the domestic political calculations of the Russian strongman. Anti-Americanism is being employed as a tool on both facets of his domestic power-structure: the democratic and authoritarian sides. Anti-Americanism has allowed Putin to create a foundation of similarity between himself and his constituents, both public and elite, thereby allowing

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<sup>291</sup> Ibid., 104.

<sup>292</sup> Shlapentokh, “Russian Attitudes toward America: A Split between the Ruling Class and the Masses,” 22.

<sup>293</sup> “Russian Public Opinion 2010–2011” (Moscow: Levada Analytical Center, 2012), 42.

him as a “democratically elected” leader to express the consensus opinion of his population. Likewise, exploitation of anti-Americanism in rhetoric and policy has been used as a means of diversion from the otherwise exploitable shortcomings of the Putinist regime.

### **1. A Leader Representative of his Constituents**

Putin entered the office of Prime Minister in 1999, and President several months later, during a period of peak anti-American attitude within both the elite circles and public at large. As Shiraev and Zubock so eloquently stated, politicians will always emerge to represent a position of a potential base of support, regardless of how strange or counter-productive said policy may be.<sup>294</sup> And Putin was the perfect Russian politician, now at the top of the elite political class, to represent the anti-American sentiments of both the elites and the public at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. By the time of his second term, Putin’s authoritarian-revival kicked into high gear. His anti-Americanism-propaganda machine revitalized widespread anti-Americanism. Putin could, thereby, portray himself as the democratically-legitimized and fervent anti-American leader of an anti-American nation.

The anti-Americanism that the Putinist machine manipulated could thereby be exploited to justify the anti-American tendencies of the ruling class. Figure 1 and previous sections show the general volatility of overall Russian public attitude toward the United States. That attitude volatility coincided with periods of high Putinist exploitation of anti-American news and propaganda. Members of the ruling class, including Putin, are able to “exaggerate the hostility of the Russian masses...to strengthen their own opinions.”<sup>295</sup> This is but further evidence supporting a domestic-political positive-feedback loop in anti-Americanism: the Putinists inflame the anti-Americanism of the populace, which compels the political elites to more vociferously portray their anti-

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<sup>294</sup> Shiraev and Zubock, *Anti-Americanism in Russia from Stalin to Putin*, 92.

<sup>295</sup> Shlapentokh, “Russian Attitudes toward America: A Split between the Ruling Class and the Masses,” 19.

Americanism, which in turn necessitates additional exploitation of anti-American propaganda by the Putinist machine, which further inflames the populace, etc. The feedback cycle continues. Anti-Americanism has become self-perpetuating, allowing Putin and his ilk to legitimately share at least one disposition with the constituent segments that he relies upon for his position, even though the general public's widespread anti-American disposition is manufactured and manipulated by Putin.

## **2. Distract the Constituents**

Putin's anti-Americanism, therefore, has allowed him to demonstrate common-cause with his populace, to be representative of them by sharing anti-American sentiments. But his public's anti-Americanism remains less than genuine given the ease with which Putin can influence it. Anti-American rhetoric and policy from Putin's Kremlin also serves one of the quintessential functions inherently desired by so many authoritarian leaders: distraction. That distraction can come in several variants and incur several benefits. Ole Holsti theorizes that many leaders around the globe show anti-American tendencies as a method of "strategic scapegoating." They proceed to lay blame for their country's ills upon the United States in hopes of distracting from their own leadership or governing shortcomings.<sup>296</sup> Putin definitely resorted to this type of scapegoating when he launched his campaign to demonize the Yeltsin-era government system; American-style democracy became guilty by association for the Yeltsin-era turmoil.

Putin's anti-American exploitation also serves to distract the nation from the critical domestic issues at the center of any mass protests or movements. Anti-Americanism has become a routine tool to "defuse support for opposition leaders" that could arise to harness any swelling popular movement against the regime.<sup>297</sup> By denouncing any domestic opposition as cohorts of the foreign enemy, anti-American

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<sup>296</sup> Holsti, *To See Ourselves as Others See Us*, 186.

<sup>297</sup> Alan Cullison, "Kremlin Resorts to Anti-Americanism." *The Wall Street Journal*, February 6, 2012, <http://search.proquest.com.libproxy.nps.edu/docview>.

stereotyping of the opposition can distract any Russian observers of the real motives and messages of the movement, like criticism of Putin's authoritarian policies or domestically repressive laws, etc.

Equally important, but connected to the aforementioned benefits of distraction by means of anti-Americanism, is the notion of keeping the elites and public from uniting in contestation of Putin's perpetual hold on power. The result of such union behind common cause, as discussed in Chapter III, could bring the Putinist machine down. Anti-Americanism, therefore, has become a critical tool to keep the masses and the elites, especially those that may already be disaffected, from uniting in opposition to Putin and or his cronies. Small, enduring, and or repeated acts of protest from the masses could be interpreted by the elites as signals of weakness of the regime, compelling others to join in the movement(s). The Putin regime cannot overtly repress such movements in true authoritarian fashion lest they undermine their claims at democratic legitimacy and recognition of political freedoms.<sup>298</sup> The Putin regime, therefore, must accommodate levels of political freedom but simultaneously avoid the emergence of potentially dangerous mass-opposition that signals weakness.<sup>299</sup> Weakness would attract the sharks to the feeding frenzy; disaffected elites might smell blood in the water and rally beside the masses; the union of the two could subsequently bring down the system. One solution: unleash the anti-American machine, as detailed above, to discredit any such movement or individuals leading it before a union of public and elites can transpire.

Like the communist party bosses before him, Putin's Kremlin's machine has proven adept at provoking anti-American, anti-foreign, and xenophobic emotions throughout the nation to effectively distract Russians from the other, more individually salient, problems.<sup>300</sup> Anti-Americanism, and the inherent hostility, fear, or at least apprehension toward the United States that it entails, is a powerful weapon for an

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<sup>298</sup> Graeme Robertson, "Managing Society: Protest, Civil Society, and Regime in Putin's Russia," *Slavic Review* 68, no. 3 (Fall, 2009), 531.

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.*, 546.

<sup>300</sup> Vladimir Shlapentokh, "The Hatred of Others: The Kremlin's Powerful but Risky Weapon," *World Affairs* 169, no. 3 (Winter 2007), 139.

authoritarian leader. Ole Holsti also posits that global anti-Americanism could be as much an effect of American public relations failures as anything else; publics simply do not have sufficient information about the United States to form positive opinions.<sup>301</sup> This could definitely be the case in Russia, where overwhelming reliance on Putinist-controlled mass media implies a lack of non-anti-American biased information. This means that all the Russian populace gets to see is information that further inflames those anti-American attitudes and emotions of fear or consternation. Putin's provoking of those feelings, thereby, allows him to further the much-employed claims of himself as a Russian "savior" in the face of external hostility toward Russia.<sup>302</sup> Such a notion is routinely vocalized by Putin or his surrogates. Putin's deputy prime minister Dmitry Rogozin, in 2012, asserted that "Putin is the only leader left in Europe who has not been run over by a steamroller of American hegemony."<sup>303</sup>

Distraction, distraction, distraction; it is a powerful ends; anti-Americanism is the means. One cannot overestimate the political benefits garnered by Putin employing his anti-American tool to distract the Russian nation at large.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

Just how anti-American is Russia beyond Putin's inner circle? Mendelson and Gerber hold that the "Putin Generation" of young Russian adults is extremely receptive to the regime's anti-Americanism and most youths hold similarly deep anti-American convictions.<sup>304</sup> The young adults of Putin's Russia were the adolescents of Yeltsin's Russia. Such a notion conforms to some of the findings in this chapter; these people would have been in early maturity during the later 1990s, as the anti-American upswing gained momentum. Putin, therefore, became the politician of the moment who happened to share the same animosity toward the United States as they had recently re-developed.

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<sup>301</sup> Holsti, *To See Ourselves as Others See Us*, 189.

<sup>302</sup> Shlapentokh, "The Hatred of Others: The Kremlin's Powerful but Risky Weapon," 140.

<sup>303</sup> Cullison, "Kremlin Resorts to Anti-Americanism."

<sup>304</sup> Sarah Mendelson and Theodore Gerber. "Us and Them: Anti-American Views of the Putin Generation," *The Washington Quarterly* 31, no. 2 (2008), 137.

Putin has effectively re-inflamed his country's anti-Americanism of late by simply professing those beliefs that he has harbored for the duration of his adult life.

As evidenced, the Russian public's level of anti-American hostility fluctuates. It increases the more Putin exhibits his own inherent anti-Americanism. A primary impetus for such fluctuation: the Putinist authoritarian-social manipulation mechanisms. Anti-Americanism by Putin, thereby, has become simply another tool at Putin's disposal to sway his nation's moods. The Putin machine may thereby exploit those moods for political benefit. Putin entered office during a time of resurgent popular anti-Americanism and has since succeeded in fanning the flames of discontent toward the United States, with public anti-Americanism rising and subsiding in parallel with the anti-Americanism displayed by Putin's machine. Vladimir Shlapentokh and Masha Lipman would concur with such an assessment.<sup>305</sup> So the relationship between Putin's and the Russian public's anti-Americanism has become perpetual; Putin's anti-Americanism inflames the public's anti-Americanism, allowing Putin's anti-Americanism to subsequently feed off of the public's anti-Americanism. The current Russian public's anti-Americanism may be widespread, but remains largely only skin deep, and could be easily transformed by a Putinist government that is unwilling to transform it because of a need of it. Anti-Americanism has become a critical element in the public domestic politics of Putin's Russia.

To prove the significance of anti-Americanism in domestic Russian politics, one need look no further than the elite segment of society, specifically those elites serving in the public sphere. Anti-Americanism among lower politicians in the 1990s eventually compelled a once ardent pro-American Yeltsin government to cede to anti-American demands. Since the later 1990s, Anti-Americanism has become a prerequisite philosophy to hold public office in Russia. With Putin's control of the organs of the state, serving in

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<sup>305</sup> Shlapentokh, "The Puzzle of Russian Anti-Americanism: From 'Below' or From 'Above,'" 886; Masha Lipman, "Russia's Politics of Anti-Americanism," *The Washington Post*, April 6, 2003, <http://www.washingtonpost.com>.

his government necessitates one possess an anti-American philosophy, be it an elected position or one subject to appointment by Putinists.<sup>306</sup>

Anti-Americanism, exacerbated in the public and exploited by the elites, has garnered distinct and beneficial political repercussions for Vladimir Putin and his hybrid authoritarian-democratic regime: conformity and distraction. Putin, intrinsically anti-American, shares a common belief with those constituents that he depends upon for his perpetual hold on power, namely the elites and the public. A politician that does not represent the will of the people that he was “elected” to represent will not be a politician for long. Anti-Americanism on the part of Putin, thereby, only enhances his claim to democratic legitimacy. Putin represents the voice of the people who “elected” him, enunciating their beliefs, like anti-Americanism, even if such a belief is manipulated by the very man claiming to represent those people. In an authoritarian-like system, the credibility of Putin’s hold on all levers of power is contingent upon the people and the elites not challenging him over it. That necessitates distracting those segments from any underlying problems that could be associated with his regime’s control, as well as distracting them from the true intent of any rising opposition movement or leader. Employing anti-Americanism in those distractive tactics has proven most effective. Distracting the two pillar segments of society to keep them from forming common cause against the regime has effectively allowed Putin, like Napoleon, to negate his opposition’s potentially superior numbers by keeping them divided.

The domestic political ramifications of Vladimir Putin’s anti-Americanism, therefore, can be as equally compelling as its effects on the global scene of international relations and foreign policy. A better understanding of the internal nature of the Russian strongman’s anti-American impetuses could provide for a more nuanced interpretation of just why he does what he does both in and outside Russia, rather than relying so much on stereotypical interpretations of the man as simple crazy.

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<sup>306</sup> Shlapentokh, “Russian Attitudes toward America: A Split between the Ruling Class and the Masses,” 20.

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## V. CONCLUSION

### A. RUSSIAN ANTI-AMERICANISM: THE MAN, THE MACHINE, AND THE NATION

This thesis sought to investigate anti-Americanism in Russia and evaluate the nature of such anti-Americanism within Vladimir Putin (the man), the Putinist government (the machine), and the Russian society at large (the nation). This work then strove to determine any correlation between the three and the domestic political implications of Putinist anti-Americanism within Russia. A revisit of the central questions posed by this thesis: (1) What are the roots of Vladimir Putin's anti-Americanism as well as the anti-American tendencies of segments of the Russian populace from the 1990s to present day? (2) What is the relationship between the progression of Putin's anti-Americanism and the anti-American sympathies of the Russian public? and, (3) What are the potential domestic political benefits garnered by Putin's hybrid authoritarian regime as a result of his anti-American rhetoric and policy positions?

#### 1. Summary of Findings

What is Putinist anti-Americanism? Scholars like Katzenstein, Keohane, and Krastev hold that anti-Americanism cannot be simplified to a single-issue phenomenon; it is a much more deeply psychological condition or outlook that permeates the entire spectrum of one's perspective toward America.<sup>307</sup> Vladimir Putin has demonstrated such an extended pattern of anti-Americanism as portrayed by his rhetoric, actions, and policy initiatives. One can trace the roots of Putin's anti-Americanism a half century prior to his presidency, to previous life experiences. From youth growing up in the Soviet Union through law school and service in the KGB, Vladimir Putin developed an anti-American cognitive pre-disposition.

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<sup>307</sup> Katzenstein and Keohane, *Anti-Americanism in World Politics*, 12; Krastev, "The Anti-American Century," 7.

In light of Robert Jervis's four strength determinative influences for cognitive pre-disposition, Putin's experience in the Cold War and Soviet anti-Western machine would have permanently conditioned his psyche toward an acrimonious perception of the United States. Did the person experience the event first hand? Did the event occur in the person's early adult life? Did the event result in big consequences for the individual's nation or the individual himself? Was the person familiar enough with the international environment that alternative explanations or perceptions regarding the event in question were possible? All four of these variables are applicable to Putin's experience in the Cold War and KGB. Jervis would contend that those events, and in the case of this thesis the anti-Americanism intrinsic in those events, would have dramatically affected Putin's perceptions of the United States. Those perceptions became engrained in the cognitive psychology of Putin during the Cold War and remain to the modern day.<sup>308</sup>

Sidelined to an observer for most of the 1990s, Putin could witness apparent slighting of Yeltsin's Russia by the United States, indicating that current and recent American actions remain analogous to past American actions, actions inherently hostile to Russia. Vladimir Putin's anti-American outward volume fluctuated during the early 2000s and in the wake of 9/11, but persisted on an internal psychological/cognitive level. It was always there and always will be there, even if the level of vociferousness alters between a whisper and a shout. After the United States rebuffed Putin's efforts to partner and integrate with the West, Putin's calculation of American actions only further proves the validity of his cognitive pre-dispositions: America is inherently hostile and his anti-Americanism is justified. Such a notion is expertly summarized by Ole Holsti who holds that people and governments worldwide tend to perceive American actions in any way that justifies the sustainment of their entrenched pre-conceptions.<sup>309</sup> This thesis surmises, therefore, that Vladimir Putin has been, is, and will be inherently anti-American.

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<sup>308</sup> Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, 239.

<sup>309</sup> Holsti, *To See Ourselves as Others See Us: How Publics Abroad View the United States after 9/11*, 216.

Putin's Russia has become "a ramshackle authoritarian system with some democratic trappings."<sup>310</sup> The hybrid democratic-authoritarian nature of the Putinist state implies that, in theory, the remnants of democratic foundations might pose an actual risk to the Putinist regime's survival. This reality necessitates the regime's employment of authoritarian mechanisms to rigidly regulate the remaining democratic practices. Elections are held but engineered to guarantee Putinist victories; opposition parties exist but are administratively relegated into an insurmountable competitive disadvantage when matched against the ruling Putinist party. As long as Russians remain materialistically better-off compared to Yeltsin years, they shall remain largely aloof from the public sphere and maintain a default vote of confidence in Putin and his less-than-liberal constitutionalism. The public, mobilized onto the streets like in 2011, and joined by disaffected elites could pose a serious challenge to the hybrid system. This makes the authoritarian Putin's need to keep one or both segments loyal, or at least ambivalent, that much more pressing. Economic success has thus far placated the masses and the elites, as well as threats of authoritarian repression upon those with power who might seek to use it against the regime, namely wealthy elites.<sup>311</sup>

Anti-Americanism has become yet another asset in Putin's authoritarian toolbox. In conjunction with the other authoritarian mechanisms, Putin employs them all in procuring continued political benefits like public and elite support, or at least their distraction. This thesis further concludes that the level of the public's hostility toward America tends to increase or decrease in conjunction with an increasing or decreasing level of anti-American vehemence displayed by Putin's Kremlin, as gauged by its messages and propaganda. The Russian public's level of anti-American hostility fluctuates by means of the Putinist authoritarian-social manipulation mechanisms, allowing Putin to sway his nation's moods as he deems prudent. Putin came to power during a time of resurgent popular anti-Americanism and has since succeeded in fanning the flames of discontent toward the United States. Shlapentokh and Lipman voice a

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<sup>310</sup> Kotkin, "Russia under Putin: Toward Democracy or Dictatorship?"

<sup>311</sup> Baker and Glasser, *Kremlin Rising*, 87.

similar sentiment.<sup>312</sup> Like some of the anti-Americanism present in limited sectors of the general public, The Russian elites' anti-Americanism also pre-dates Putin's presidency and has become a quintessential characteristic for advancement or survival in the regime and in the remnant democratic electoral processes. Putin in 1999, therefore, became the politician of the moment who happened to share the same animosity toward the United States as had been recently re-established within the public and the majority of the elites. Putin did not sow the seeds of wide Russian anti-Americanism. Public and elite anti-Americanism germinated before Putin, but has truly flowered under Putin.

## **2. The Russian Connection: Anti-Americanism and the Putin-State-Polity Link**

Based on the findings in this thesis, a perpetual relationship has become established between Vladimir Putin's anti-Americanism and the Russian populace's anti-Americanism, to include the public and elite sectors. Putin's anti-Americanism, by means of his authoritarian mechanisms, sufficiently arouses the public's anti-Americanism, thereby allowing Putin and the political elites to further feed off of that public temperament. The current Russian public's anti-Americanism could be easily reduced by a Putinist government that is unwilling to orchestrate its reduction because the Putinist government needs it. Anti-Americanism has become a critical element in the public domestic politics of Putin's Russia. Putin has perfected the practice of employing the state mechanisms inherent within his hybrid authoritarian-democratic regime to fully exploit anti-Americanism to garner distinct domestic political benefits and subsequently ensure the perpetuity of his regime. Anti-Americanism has become a tool for Putin to demonstrate democratic political conformity while simultaneously providing authoritarian political distraction.

Putin, intrinsically anti-American, can share a common conviction with the public and elites, both of whom his hold on power relies. A politician unable to represent any commonality with the society he was "elected" to represent may not be allowed to

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<sup>312</sup> Shlapentokh, "The Puzzle of Russian Anti-Americanism: From 'Below' or From 'Above,'" 886; Masha Lipman, "Russia's Politics of Anti-Americanism," *The Washington Post*, April 6, 2003, <http://www.washingtonpost.com>.

represent such people for long. Anti-Americanism on the part of Putin, thereby, only enhances his claim to democratic legitimacy, because he represents the voice of the people who “elected” him, enunciating their beliefs, like anti-Americanism, even though that particular belief has been overtly manipulated by the very man claiming to represent those people. Anti-Americanism, therefore, is a tool for Putin on both faces of his regime: on the democratic side it is used for political conformity and on the authoritarian side, political distraction.

In Putin’s authoritarian-like system, his monopoly on all levers of power remains subject to an inability of the masses and the elites to mount a robust challenge to him. Anti-Americanism, thereby, can be employed in distracting those segments of society from any underlying problems that could be associated with Putin’s regime. Putin’s use of anti-Americanism also distracts the population from the true character of any rising opposition movement or leader. Any potentially popular anti-Putin policy initiatives that the movement or individual champion become muddled in the barrage of accusations labeling them as pro-American. Putin’s anti-American tool, therefore, has proven equally useful in distracting the two pillar segments of society from forming common cause against the regime.

In summary, anti-Americanism in the Russian domestic sphere has become interwoven within the linkages connecting Putin (the man), the Putinist hybrid state system (the machine), and the Russian polity (the nation). Anti-Americanism of the man, by way of the machine, has influenced anti-Americanism of the nation; a positive feedback relationship between Putin and his polity has developed. The state machine powers that loop for the political benefit of Putin and his cadre.

## **B. ANTI-AMERICANISM’S ROLE IN THE FUTURE OF RUSSIAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS**

How can the United States constructively interact with a Russian Federation led by an ardent anti-American who has grown quite adept at transposing his inherent anti-Americanism upon much of his society for domestic political gain? Can the United States simply overlook the Putinist hostility, discounting it as irrelevant in the broader

scope of international relations? If America can look past the phenomenon, should it? The fact remains, Russia and the United States represent two states with significant leverage on the international scene. Though the extent of Russia's practical leverage remains debatable, interaction among the one current great power and one former and aspiring great power are unavoidable, regardless of mutual suspicion between the two.

### **1. Most Recent Events**

How can one view the most recent events in U.S.-Russian relations through the anti-American prism? Extreme global tension over the Syrian chemical weapons usage seems to have subsided. Cooler heads prevailed in light of an international agreement to rid Syria of all its chemical weapons. International agreements on such a scope and scale are rare these days, given the differences of opinion on all the most pressing issues among the powers at be, especially Russia and the United States. One could view the U.N. agreement to destroy Bashar al Assad's stockpiles in several different ways: Putin simply reigned in his ally Assad, or the U.S. inadvertently ceded diplomatic initiative to Putin, or the U.S. bluffed its military intentions and the other side folded. The process leading up to the landmark international agreement shall be debated for generations. In the end, there are fewer WMDs on the planet than before, and, so far, the Assad government is cooperating with the U.N. inspection teams and destruction of the weapons proceeds on schedule.<sup>313</sup> The U.N. entity overseeing the destruction effort even garnered a Nobel Peace Prize out of the deal.

In the face of such rare and effective international cooperation, Russian-American relations remain decidedly cool. Putinist antipathy toward the United States remains, with the only significant change possibly being Putin's ego. His renewed confrontational attitude toward the United States continues to reap political benefits within Russia and outside Russia. *Forbes* deemed Putin the world's most powerful global figure of 2013, relegating the U.S. President to second place given Putin's position in the middle of the Syrian affair, Russian economic leverage, and an unprecedented and never-ending U.S.

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<sup>313</sup> Loveday Morris and Michael Birnbaum, "Syria has Destroyed Chemical Weapons Facilities, International Inspectors Say," *The Washington Post*, October 31, 2013, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/world>.

House of Representatives' hamstringing of all of President Obama's domestic initiatives.<sup>314</sup> Where American politics seems non-functional due to hyper-partisanship, Putin's domestic politics are stable (i.e., unabashedly controlled) thanks to the Putinist machine, of which anti-Americanism has become an essential cog.

American prestige around the globe has suffered due to ongoing NSA spying revelations, most of which continue to originate from Edward Snowden, granted asylum by Putin's Russia. New information, nevertheless, continues to spill from the Snowden stolen documents, even though Putin himself reiterated before Snowden was granted asylum that "If he wants to stay here, there is one condition: He must stop his activities aimed at inflicting damage on our American partners, no matter how strange it may sound coming from my lips."<sup>315</sup> Well, Snowden continues to leak like a sieve, doing damage to U.S. interests but there is no sign of his forthcoming expulsion from Putinist Russia: just another anti-American slight in a long line of anti-American slights from Vladimir Putin. Putinist controlled media continues to highlight the U.S. spying programs while barely mentioning reports of Russian espionage incidents, including recording devices placed in G20 leaders' welcome baskets in St. Petersburg. Putin's government simply discredits any such allegations: "We don't know the sources of the information...However, this is undoubtedly nothing but an attempt to shift the focus from issues that truly exist in relations between European capitals and Washington to unsubstantiated, non-existent issues."<sup>316</sup> This statement was courtesy of Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov towing the official Kremlin line and reverting any domestic conversation back to negative and inflated stories of America. Anti-Americanism, therefore, remains central to ongoing events in Putin's Russia.

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<sup>314</sup> Caroline Howard, "The World's Most Powerful People 2013," *Forbes*, October 30, 2013, <http://www.forbes.com/powerful-people>.

<sup>315</sup> Tom Raum, "Edward Snowden Must Stop Leaking Secrets To Stay In Russia, Putin Says," *The Huffington Post*, July 1, 2013, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/07/01/edward-snowden-putin\\_n\\_3529533.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/07/01/edward-snowden-putin_n_3529533.html)

<sup>316</sup> Alexei Maishev, "Putin's Spokesman Denies Media Reports of Spying on G20 Powers," *RIA Novsti*, October 29, 2013, <http://en.ria.ru/world/20131029/184418465.html>.

## 2. How Can America Cope?

The question remains: how can (or should) America cope with an anti-American Putinist Russia? How should U.S. leaders perceive the nature of Putin's and his nation's anti-American bent in light of the observations posed by this thesis? Analyzing the seemingly anti-American policies of Putin, both foreign and domestic, without considering his internal political situation seems fundamentally impractical.

Given the authoritarian nature of Vladimir Putin operating under the guise of democratic legitimacy, the politics behind his foreign policy must be given equal consideration as the foreign policy itself. This thesis has demonstrated how Vladimir Putin remains beholden to within his domestic realm. Because Putin has established a hybrid-authoritarian system in which his position is not completely full proof, his domestic audience of elites and mass public could, in theory, punish him with removal. Jessica Weeks, in studying international affairs and conflict involving authoritarian leaders, would characterize Putin as a nonpersonalist leader, or one who has "strong incentives to attend to the preferences of their domestic audience" in matters of foreign relations or international confrontation.<sup>317</sup> In Putin's case as detailed in this thesis, his domestic audience is composed of independently strong anti-American elites and an anti-American general public made so by Putin. The preferences of Putin's domestic audience, therefore, remain that their government (Putin) should remain stubborn and confrontational toward the United States. Poll numbers lend credence to such a consensus, with vast majorities of Russians since 2003 classifying the United States as a violent aggressor country.<sup>318</sup> Putin, therefore, should stand up to the United States.

Weeks further theorizes that an autocrat's actions in the international arena may be attributable to that autocrat's audience cost at home. Threats made by authoritarian or largely non-democratic leaders on the world stage could be more credible because backing down from such threats could incur negative audience costs for the leader; his

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<sup>317</sup> Jessica Weeks, "Strongmen and Straw Men: Authoritarian Regimes and the Initiation of International Conflict," *American Political Science Review* 106, no. 2 (May 2012), 327.

<sup>318</sup> "Russian Public Opinion 2010–2011" (Moscow: Levada Analytical Center, 2012), 293.



audience could punish him for backing down.<sup>319</sup> In Weeks' model, the autocrat's primary domestic audience is regime elites who could organize the leader's downfall. In Putin's case, however, the Russian society's elites and the mass public could orchestrate the regime's failure. Putin's calculation of audience costs for backing down from (i.e., dramatically altering or reversing) his regime's anti-Americanism could be more complex and wide-ranging.

Or, perhaps, "it's the foreign policy, stupid."<sup>320</sup> Should America assume that we alone are primarily to blame for Putinist/Russian and greater global anti-Americanism? If the United States wants to pacify some of the anti-American rancor present beyond its borders, then perhaps it must change its foreign policies and seek actions to improve America's image rather than continually tarnishing it, or so Juan Cole contends.<sup>321</sup> More humble-humanitarian and less militaristic policies could improve America's global appearance.

More YouTube videos of American aid to suffering people will not likely compel the Russian President to be less anti-American. The best approach that the United States should take in dealing with the anti-American Putinist Russia of today is likely an amalgamation of multiple different approaches. Better global PR represents only one possible solution. Deal with Putin for what he is; his rhetoric and policy stances toward the United States should be considered partially pragmatic in light of the domestic political situation that he created for himself. And Americans should not immediately discount U.S. actions as benign and non-incendiary toward Putin and Russia; put oneself in his shoes (i.e., mind) and consider how to view American actions through his historically paranoid perspective. Putin *is* anti-American; Putin *is* an authoritarian; Putin *does* benefit politically from anti-Americanism; Russian/Putinist anti-Americanism *is not* going anywhere.

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<sup>319</sup> Jessica Weeks, "Autocratic Audience Costs: Regime Type and Signaling Resolve," *International Organization* 62, no. 1 (January 2008), 36.

<sup>320</sup> Juan Cole, "Anti-Americanism: It's the Policies," *The American Historical Review* 111, no. 4 (October 2006), 1129, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/ahr.111.4.1120>.

<sup>321</sup> Ibid.

### **C. FINAL ANALYSIS**

Vladimir Putin's current six-year term as President of the Russian Federation ends in 2018, with a constitutionally-viable option for another six year term. So Putin could remain the head of the Russian state for the next decade, or longer, for he has yet to show any inclination toward ceding his power. Putin, therefore, is not going anywhere; the United States must interact with him regardless of our personal feelings toward him. Putin has engineered a political system contingent upon his perpetual placement atop the power-pyramid. That placement has been secured over nearly a decade of power and political consolidation, using all means available to him: public discrediting of any alternative, authoritarian electioneering, and anti-American exploitation.

Though America may frown upon the undemocratic nature of Putin's system and the propagated anti-American hostility that has become a cornerstone, Putin's existence at the top carries a level of stability. The world is getting smaller. Instability anywhere in the world tends to have second and third order effects and implications to all the major world players. Regional crises owing to state political instability are becoming ever-more commonplace around the globe. As American relative power wanes, our ability to deal with and offset so many crises becomes unlikely. An internally stable anti-American Russia led by a man inherently acrimonious toward the United States, but so far unwilling to truly push the envelope toward open and violent hostility, seems like an all-around better option for the world environment than some of the alternatives.

The United States must interact with Russia one way or another in this ever-changing global dynamic. Understanding the nature and impetuses of Putinist Russia's anti-Americanism could go a long way in aiding American policy-makers' perception of just why Putin and Russia do what they do. By better understanding Putin's political situation within his state and the political necessity of anti-American rhetoric and policy, Western entities might be better able to interact with Vladimir Putin rather than discounting his actions as only the whims of a paranoid Russian strong-man.

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